This edition represents two full calendar years since the return of the *Valley Voice*. It remains our commitment to feature local stories you might otherwise not have the chance to explore. We'd like to thank our readers everywhere by saying that our time with you has virtually disappeared in a flash, and to renew our promise to chase down the facts for you. Here's to many more years to come!

VALLEY VOICE

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Is Tulare County's GOP Conservative Enough?

Dave Adalian

There may be trouble on the Tulare County Republican Central Committee. Or, there might not be. It depends on who you ask.

"There's always things like that you get on any central committee," said Committee member Dennis Smith, who expressed surprise at the suggestion all was not well among members of the Committee. "I'm not going to call it dissension."

Committee Chair James Henderson also expressed confusion over the notion: "There's no issues within the Central Committee whatsoever," he said. "There are zero problems."

But Tulare resident Michele Moore, who describes herself as a member of the Tea Party as well as a registered Republican, says she feels the local GOP Central Committee is too much controlled by what she terms "the establishment."

Establishment Influence

To support her claim, Moore cites the influence of Charles Munger Jr., a frequent GOP donor, who gave more than $565,000 to the Tulare County GOP Central Committee in 2013 during the campaign of State Senator Andy Vidak (R-14), as well as what she sees as reluctance to support some Republican candidates, most notably Assemblyman Devon Mathis (R-Visalia). Mathis won his seat in a contest against fellow Republican Rudy Mendoza, Mayor of Woodlake, who was framed by local media as the heir apparent to Assemblywoman Connie Conway, who termed out in 2014.

"When I first went in seeking some help from the Republican Party, I didn't get much interest," Moore said. "I'm new to politicking. I just struck out on my own with my own people."

What Moore sees on the

GOP continued on **11 »**

It got their goat that the chicken initiative failed. Pro-goat rally in front of the Visalia Convention Center before the public hearing Monday on raising chickens in residential zones.

Chickens Do Not Cross Road

Catherine Doe

The Visalia City Council held a public hearing Monday, June 1 to discuss allowing chickens in standard residential areas. This hearing comes on the heels of a Visalia City Planning Commission where the ordinance was rejected in its current form. The commission did not reject the idea outright, but felt the ordinance should require coops and possibly a permitting process.

After an hour-long hearing, the city council voted 3-2 against amending the city ordinance to allow chickens in residential areas. The vote was council members Greg Collins, Steve Nelsen and Bob Link against, and Amy Shuklian and Warren Gubler in favor of amending the ordinance.

As during the Planning Commission hearing, pro-chicken constituents outnumbered the anti-chicken constituents 13 - 2. The pro-chicken attendees were buttressed by a large contingent of miniature goat supporters. The two groups have become intertwined as kindred spirits in their quest for food freedom and private property rights. The pro-goat group held a rally outside of the convention center before the regular city council meeting. Their group has been trying unsuccessfully for about a month to get the city council to put their cause on the general meeting agenda. They want keeping mini goats, along with chickens, to be legal in standard residential zones.

Although, at the hearing, those in favor of allowing chickens outnumbered those against, Mayor Steve Nelsen disagreed that the majority of Visalians were in favor of raising chickens in town. He said that he took his own straw poll by email, walking the neighborhood, and at work, and found that it was actually 1% in favor and 99% against allowing chickens in residential zones. Nelsen felt

CHICKENS continued on **9 »**

New hotels similar to the Sequoia Inn, which is located outside of the downtown area, would not be allowed to offer food service or meeting rooms.

Hotel, Motel Issue Goes to Hanford Council

Dave Adalian

In a 4-3 split decision, the Hanford Planning Commission will not recommend changes to zoning regulations for motels, hotels and inns that would have allowed food service and meeting rooms at new facilities constructed outside the downtown area.

The vote, made at a May 26 meeting, goes against a staff recommendation from the city's Community Development Department, which advocated making changes to the decades-old zoning ordinance after having to repeatedly deny requests from interested investors. The vote also went against the recommendation medical offices larger than 6,000 square feet be allowed downtown without a special exemption. But, the main focus was on guest accommodations.

"The way the ordinance currently reads, a motel can't have a coffee pot, a microwave, any food," said Darlene Mata, the city's Community Development director. "We've had three requests. We haven't been able to tell people they're going to open."

Talk of the Town

The issue was a hot topic at a town hall meeting in February. At the time, those who framed the 20-year-old law explained the reasoning behind it, saying the restrictions were intended to keep the downtown a vibrant commercial center for the city, and that the ordinances had done their job. Others, citing a 15-percent occupancy rate, questioned whether the city needed more rooms.

One of the main points made at the May 26 meeting was most travelers, especially those traveling for business, now expect to have at least coffee service,

HANFORD continued on **7 »**

Weather Predictions for the End of the Year are Just Too Difficult to Forecast Yet

Nancy Vigran

Due to the cooler temperatures in May, along with some precipitation, and the abundance of rainfall in the central, southern part of the country, some scientists are already predicting a wetter winter than normal for California. But it is just too early to tell, said Jim Dudley, U.S. Weather Service forecaster in Hanford.

There are signs of an El Nino, but just how strong it will be is yet to be seen, he said.

There is some correlation between recent weather trends in the U.S. and the warm "blob," an area of water in the Pacific two to seven degrees Fahrenheit warmer than the surrounding water. The "blob" was named by Nick Bond, a climate scientist at the University of Washington's Joint Institute for the Study of the Atmosphere and Ocean.

This warm "blob," first spotted in late 2013, measures approximately 1,000 miles along the coast from Alaska to Mexico, and sits about 300 feet

WEATHER continued on **7 »**

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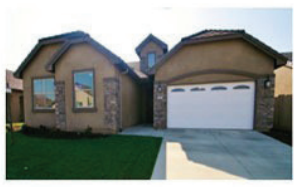

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FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

The Audacity of Dupe

If you thought the Republicans had learned anything from their debacle of 2012 you are currently being shown otherwise. In that year's presidential primary, the Republican party fielded a surfeit of candidates, each more cartoonish than the last, and all striving to outdo the others in terms of idiocy. Three years ago--finally reconciled to the idea of living in the 21st Century--I watched in disbelief while, in a "debate," a spate of candidates was in all seriousness each asked if they believed in evolution. This is beyond embarrassing.

And while the Republicans may yet side-step such nonsense, they once more are fielding an inordinately large number of candidates. I suppose this is in keeping with their self-described "big tent" appeal.

On the other side of the equation, of course, is Hillary Clinton, running virtually unopposed in the Democratic party. She will face challengers whose only tangible purpose will be to help plane and sand the planks of what will become the party's platform. Apart from that, she appears to be home free. And why shouldn't she be? She is, assuredly, the most experienced person in politics today. Hillary Clinton has been first lady both of Arkansas and the United States; she has been a United States Senator and, finally, a United States Secretary of State.

Forget the Benghazi imbroglio. Forget the email malarkey. Hillary Clinton has made only one mistake-- and a truly gargantuan blunder it was, to be sure: her 2002 Senate vote to authorize military action in Iraq. This, memorably, dogged her in the 2008 primary. But at least now she owns it. In her 2014 book "Hard Choices" she writes, "I thought I had acted in good faith and made the best decision I could with the information I had. And I wasn't alone in getting it wrong. But I still got it wrong. Plain and simple."

She's right about that. But former President George W. Bush is not when he asserts the same thing about the information he had. He had the truth, and then lied to Congress. That it was a war for corporate cronyism we can leave for later.

Ah, the Republicans and their tall tales! Climate change as unproven, for example--and certainly not man-made. The notion that a tax cut on the wealthy directly benefits those of lower classes because the rich are their employers. The idea that the entire republic is rife, if not epidemic with, voter fraud.

And what do Republicans do anywhere they secure an insurmountable majority? First, they attack the abortion and reproductive rights of every woman in their constituency. Next--because of the urgency in contending with the aforesaid voter fraud--they restrict early voting or provisional and write-in ballots or require that some new-fangled identification be produced before one enters the voting booth. These are all aimed at minorities, as is well known, and not because of racism--heavens!--but because most minorities tend to vote with the Democrats. The Republicans would have you believe, then--as they look down their ever extending noses--that such tactics are, politically speaking, strictly expedient. Aren't they the party of the "big tent?"

Let's think about that: The Republican Party shamelessly targets women and minorities, so I suppose it could describe itself as "big tent"--provided that the huge tent is reserved for a tiny group. A minority, ironically: the wealthy. The tent is a mansion, really, and the Republicans are lost--if not steeled--within it. Don't ask me how any of them get elected. All I can think of is the Stockholm Syndrome.

Tulare County is a prime example of this. As one of a very blue state's most impoverished counties, Tulare remains incandescently red. The Republican party and its tumor, the Tea Party, both do very well here. Curious, isn't it?

But what's curiouser and curiouser down this Republican rabbit hole--where the poor are conservative, and the rich actively strive to purge many poor from the voter rolls (Up in the naked light of day this would just be called Jim Crow)--is that while the Republicans seek to shrink the electorate, they see fit to foist upon it far too many presidential candidates. They'd love nothing more than a streamlined government pandering to a winnowed constituency.

This sense of entitlement is astonishing. It's the Audacity of Dupe. Could someone please explain to me why the GOP seems always free to reduce itself to chicanery as opposed to winning any argument on its merits? And just what character flaw is it that makes many of these blowhard candidates think they're any good at their current jobs, to say nothing of how they'd perform as President? Each of the 20 or more carries baggage that to my reckoning makes them ultimately unelectable.

You might detest Hillary Clinton. Many do. But at least her faux pas remains popular on the right--voting in favor of the war.

Or are the Republicans going to disavow the war now? Oh, how I miss the honest Republicans of my youth--Richard Nixon, for instance.

— Joseph Oldenbourg

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Political Fix

Catherine Doe

Supervisor Allen Ishida Declares His Candidacy for Governor

Supervisor Allen Ishida filed his intent to run for Governor of California on May 15. He can't formally declare his candidacy until 2016, but wanted to get his campaign committee number from the Fair Political Practices Commission so he can start fundraising. His announcement is historically significant because Sup. Ishida may be the first serious candidate for governor to be born and raised in Tulare County.

When Sup. Ishida was first elected in 2004 he intended on staying in office for three terms and then retiring from politics. But his extensive work in Sacramento, and traveling around the state because of his committee assignments, made him see that "the state of California legislation is dysfunctional."

That was the deciding factor in his decision to run for governor.

Sup. Ishida's third term will be over in 2016, which will give him two years to concentrate on campaigning. His goal is to get his name known in the urban areas. If elected governor, his focus will be reviving the middle class, water issues, and reducing the regulatory atmosphere in Sacramento that currently prevents business from getting done in California.

According to a quote from the *Fresno Bee*, Sup. Ishida declared, "I am running because I do believe I have a chance to win. We need change. I'm not running to make a point."

Sup. Ishida and Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom are the only two candidates who have officially announced their intentions to run. There is speculation that former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa will run as well. His entrance into the race could split the Democratic vote and be advantageous to Sup. Ishida, whose announcement might also be met with a sigh of relief from the California Republican Party. Politically, they have to field someone to run against the very popular and charismatic Lt. Gov. Newsom, and Sup. Ishida could be seen as their sacrificial lamb.

Sup. Ishida has faced scant opposition in his reelection bids for supervisor, and Tulare County has come out of the recession better than most counties in the state. So if he campaigns based on his job performance, he has as good a chance as any Republican of doing well.

But being Governor of all California, instead of just one county, is more than passing a balanced budget on time or dealing with the drought. It's about defending the rights of all Californians. Will Sup. Ishida defend the rights of gay married couples? Will he protect our newly won healthcare benefits through Obamacare? When California legalizes pot, will he work effectively with the growers and sellers to mainstream the process? Will he defend a woman's right to choose? Can Sup. Ishida represent the values of millennials as well as those of his generation if elected governor?

Sup. Ishida has said that he is starting his campaign three years early so he can get his name known throughout the state. So we have plenty of time see.

Will the Real Welfare Queens Please Stand Up?

Do you remember last Christmas when the management of Walmart put out a bin in one of their stores to collect donations for their workers so they could have a holiday meal and presents under their tree?

Since when do fulltime workers not earn enough to celebrate Christmas? Well, since retail chain stores and fast food establishments figured out how to rig the system.

Conservative members of Congress and the Senate scold American citizens who receive government assistance to "go get a job!" What they aren't telling you is that most of those Americans do have a job. It's just that minimum wage workers, such as those employed by McDonalds and Walmart, are paid so little they qualify for welfare, food stamps, healthcare and housing assistance.

A typical McDonalds franchise makes between $500,000 and $700,000 profit a year in an average market. A franchise in a big city makes will over a million. According to a report published to coincide with Tax Day, April 15, Walmart's low-wage workers cost U.S. taxpayers an estimated $6.2 billion in public assistance.

Why aren't Walmart and McDonalds paying for these things like Starbucks does?

We willingly subsidize the owners of McDonalds and Walmart while they go whistling to the bank. Our tax dollars pay for their employees' healthcare and food while the franchise owners take their families skiing in Zermatt or watch the sunset over the ocean from their luxury vacation home.

But there's more.

Not only do the tax payers subsidize Walmart's employees, but those employees turn right around and spend their subsidized dollars at Walmart. According to Walmart's own analyst, "We estimate that the company accounted for $13.5 billion in food stamp sales in 2013."

That's $20 billion dollars fools like you and me are handing over to Walmart. And the owners of Walmart? They earn more every year than the gross national product of many countries.

If food stamps and Medicaid were eliminated, it's not like McDonalds and Walmart would raise their employees' salaries to cover the difference. They wouldn't. So that is not the solution. But, wouldn't it be nice to hear a presidential candidate declare, "I plan on sending Walmart and McDonalds a bill for every one of their employees who qualify for Obamacare. I plan on sending any corporation a bill for every employee who qualifies for food stamps. This sense of entitlement has to end!"

That would make for a memorable election cycle.

Making the Cut

Former Gov. George E. Pataki, former Senator Rick Santorum, and South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham each recently officially declared they were running for the Republican nomination for president. Unfortunately for them, they rank in the bottom 20 of the pack. According to the new Fox News guidelines for debates, they won't even be invited to participate.

Fox News officials said that to participate in the debate, candidates "must place in the top 10 of an average of the five most recent national polls, as recognized by Fox News." This formula is also approved by the Republican National Committee. The first debate is co-sponsored, along with Fox News, by Facebook and will be aired August 6.

I suggested in my last Political Fix that the Republican debates be like the old Hollywood Squares game. Fox News could put 20 candidates up in a grid and have the moderator ask each candidate a question and the audience could decide if the candidate is telling the truth or not. Instead, Fox News and CNN cast aside my idea, and decided to only allow the top 10 polling candidates on the debate stage. Even more humiliating is CNN's formula. It decided to let the second tier candidates debate the following night. Can someone say "losers."

Given Fox's formula, that means that someone like Donald Trump would be debating Gov. Jeb Bush and Sen. Marco Rubio, but Sen. Rick Santorum would be excluded. As much as I'd like to see Mr. Trump on that stage, it's hard to fathom that the person who came in second for the Republican nomination in 2012 wouldn't be invited to debate.

Sen. Santorum has voiced his displeasure with Fox News. He pointed out that in 2012, he was close to last, if not dead last, in the polls but went on to win 12 primaries. He said that polls are not an accurate gauge of the viability of a candidate. That should be left up to the voters.

Another casualty of Fox's criteria would be the Republican Party's only woman in the race. It would take nothing less than a miracle for Carly Fiorina to make the poll numbers to qualify for the August 6 debate. And Ms. Fiorina should not be expected to. Outside of California she is an unknown. Yet she has been the candidate out front when it comes to campaigning against Sec. Hillary Clinton. While the others waste their time beating up Obama, who last I heard wasn't even running for anything, she keeps her eyes on the ball.

CNN's bench warmer solution is even worse. How is the Republican Party going to look when they put their only female candidate on the loser debate night?

In the top tier are Gov. Bush, Governor Mike Huckabee, Governor Scott Walker, Sen. Rubio, retired neurosurgeon Dr. Ben Carson, Senator Rand Paul, Senator Ted Cruz, Governor Chris Christie and Donald Trump fill out the top nine in Quinnipiac's survey. The second tier includes Governor Rick Perry, Senator Lindsey Graham, Governor Bobby Jindal, Sen. Santorum, and Ms. Fiorina, the former head of Hewlett-Packard.

It's Everyone For Themselves:

If Fox News and the RNC expect their winnowing tactics to encourage a few candidates to drop out, they need to think again.

According to the *New York Times*, "A new poll from Quinnipiac University shows that at this early stage in the contest, the Republican pack is essentially leaderless, with five candidates — or likely candidates — leading the group with support of about 10% of voters apiece. With no front-runner and identical numbers for the top five contenders, it's a horse race which can only be described as a scrambled field."

With no clear leader, what candidate would be foolish enough to drop out? It's anyone's ball game now.

The Republicans may be leaderless, but they are happy. According to Politico.com, "Fifty-seven percent of Republicans and GOP-leaning voters surveyed in a new poll from Pew Research Center say they have good or even 'excellent' impressions of their party's presidential candidates." The field may be crowded, but it's crowded with more senators and governors with longer resumes than in 2012.

This is a far cry from when Mitt Romney looked like he might get the nomination in 2012 and Republicans were begging for Gov. Christie and Gov. Bush to get into the race.

It's Never Too Early To Talk Vice President

I was having coffee with a conservative Washington insider who said he would rather chew on bullets than see another Clinton/Bush match up. Although I have been less than impressed with Gov. Bush's performance so far, I think my friend better start chewing. Sen. Rubio has had moments of brilliance but more high profile flubs, and Gov. Walker will rise in the polls then crash once the American public gets to know him. In a Pew Poll, Gov. Walker appeared to be the least well-known, with 36% of those asked saying they couldn't give an opinion on him. Just wait until they can.

On the Democratic side, Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont and former Governor of Maryland, Martin O'Malley, have declared their candidacy. They may not be real threats but at least we will have some warm bodies to accompany Sec. Clinton on the debate stage.

Since Sec. Clinton has been preordained the winner, it's never too early to hypothesize about her running mate. Henry Cisneros, who served as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) under former President Bill Clinton, said late last week that Sec. Clinton's only choice for a vice presidential running mate is the man who holds his former position, Julián Castro.

According to the *San Antonio Express-News*, Sec. Cisneros said, "What I am hearing in Washington, including from people in Hillary Clinton's campaign, is that the first person on their lists is Julián Castro. They don't have a second option, because he is the superior candidate considering his record, personality, demeanor and Latin heritage." Julian Castro is the current HUD Secretary in the Obama Administration.

If Sec. Clinton does choose Mr. Castro, he could be the first Latino vice presidential candidate in U.S. history.

And Finally….

Pope Francis beatified Arch Bishop Oscar Romero May 23, which is the

POLITICAL FIX continued on **11 »**

Alta Irrigation District Will Run No Water

Linda Renn, *Dinuba Sentinel*

Alta Irrigation District will deliver no water this year.

"This is the first time in 127 years we haven't delivered," said Chris Kapheim, general manager of the district which was formed in 1888.

It gets worse.

Kapheim said this is the first year he's seen that there will be no water runs in the Fresno Irrigation District, Consolidated Irrigation District and Alta Irrigation District.

A fourth year of drought has left the Kings River runoff at only 9% of normal for April through July. Even in the previous dry years of 1924 and 1977, the runoff was around 24%.

Last year Alta was able to deliver a month-long run to its users. "We had to beg, borrow and steal to make that happen last year," said Kapheim.

This year the canals will be empty all summer. In contrast, in a wet year the district might deliver water from April to October.

"This year is going to be devastating," said Kapheim. "The whole impact on the system. If you don't have surface water you pump the groundwater extra hard ...This is a survival year."

Kapheim sees issues ahead with water quality on the east side and more wells going dry, especially later in the summer.

"This is still early yet," he said. "It's not crunch time."

Despite the lack of water, Alta Irrigation District is on solid financial ground. The district collects $19.95 per acre annually from growers within the district, whether or not any water is delivered.

Additionally, in years when water is available farmers are charged a volumetric rate for any water they receive. This pays for the actual cost of water delivery including the salaries for ditchtenders and expenses for trucks and fuel, etc.

Alta Irrigation District has already initiated the short-term layoff of seven maintenance people including ditchtenders. Kapheim expects they will be hired back in October when the district has a contract with Tulare County to do pipeline mitigation along Avenue 416 west of Road 56.

"We're not laying off people just to cut expenses, said Kapheim. "Our work is caught up … we have a balanced budget."

The good news is that when wet years come again the water table can rebound. In the meantime local agencies have begun discussions on long-term groundwater sustainability, a requirement of the state water law that will go into effect in 2020.

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act empowers local agencies to adopt groundwater management plans that are tailored to the resources and needs of their communities. Groundwater sustainability plans for critically overdrafted basins must be adopted by 2020.

For the past five or six months representatives of irrigation districts, cities and public utility districts on the east side of the Kings River have been coming together to plan for the formation of a Groundwater Sustainability Agency.

"We want to be sustainable," said Kapheim.

The group meets monthly and includes representatives from the cities of Orange Cove, Dinuba and Reedley, the public utility districts in Orosi and Cutler, the Orange Cove, Hills Valley and Alta irrigation districts and local farmers.

"It's in all of our best interests to manage groundwater as best we can," said Kapheim.

Alta Irrigation District includes acreage in Tulare, Fresno and a small portion of Kings counties, according to the district's website.

The towns of Dinuba and Reedley are within the district's boundaries which encompass approximately 129,000 acres, with 111,000 cropped acres. The district operates 250 miles of open canals and 75 miles of pipelines.

Wal-Mart to Pay $820,000 in Consumer Protection Settlement

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., will pay $820,000 to settle a consumer-protection action brought by the Office of the District Attorney, County of Tulare, the City Attorney of San Diego and the Yolo County District Attorney's Office alleging that Wal-Mart failed to disclose and misrepresented warranties on tires sold at its stores in California.

The complaint accused the giant retail chain of failing to provide warranty documents and information required by law, and making misleading statements to consumers about its no-cost treadwear warranty on Goodyear Wrangler Radial tires.

The complaint alleged that, at various times, Wal-Mart employees falsely claimed:

- Wal-Mart would not honor the treadwear warranty;
- Goodyear would honor the treadwear warranty;
- Wal-Mart would assume responsibility for the treadwear warranty for Goodyear if an additional road-hazard warranty was purchased from Wal-Mart at $10 per tire; and,
- The treadwear warranty was unavailable without the road-hazard warranty.

Wal-Mart admitted no wrongdoing in the settlement. It fully cooperated in the investigation and has revised its practices to comply with applicable law.

As part of the stipulated judgment, Wal-Mart agreed to train employees in its Auto Care Centers about the material terms of its tire warranties, including the identity of the warrantor.

The judgment included $685,000.00 in civil penalties, with each of the prosecuting agencies receiving $228,333.33.

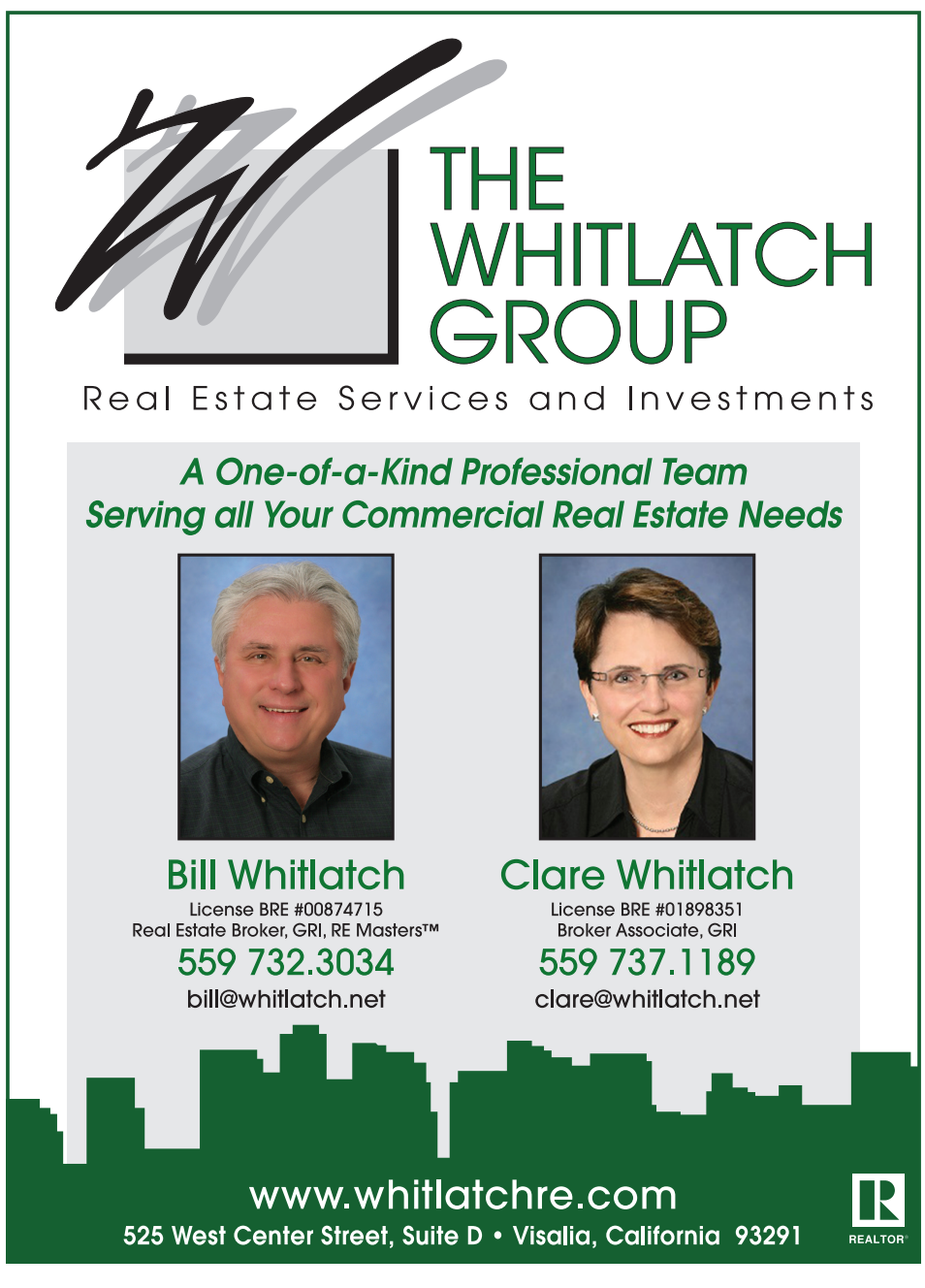
In addition, restitution in the amount of $85,000.00 will be paid to two statewide funds:

- $50,000.00 to the Tire Recycling Management Fund, which provides grants to clean up illegally disposed tires; and
- $35,000.00 to the Consumer Protection Prosecution Trust Fund, to aid in the prosecution of consumer protection cases.

Wal-Mart will also pay $50,000.00 in costs associated with the investigation and prosecution of this matter in the following amounts:

- $15,000.00 to the Tulare County District Attorney's Office,
- $22,312.00 to San Diego City Attorney's Office,
- $10,000.00 to the Yolo County District Attorney's Office, and
- $2,688.00 to the aforementioned Consumer Protection Prosecution Trust Fund.

This case was handled locally by Senior Deputy District Attorney Rodney Blaco and District Attorney Investigator John Lee.



UPHS Receives Gold Ribbon Award From State

Staff Reports

TCOE's University Preparatory High School (UPHS) is one of 180 high schools in California to receive the state's new Gold Ribbon School Award. A few weeks ago, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson announced that 193 middle schools and 180 high schools are being honored under the state's new Gold Ribbon Schools Awards Program, which is temporarily taking the place of the California Distinguished Schools Program.

"These schools are academically successful, vibrant, and innovative centers of learning and teaching," Torlakson said. "They provide great examples of the things educators are doing right — embracing rigorous academic standards, providing excellence and creativity in teaching, and creating a positive school climate."

The California Gold Ribbon Schools Award was created to honor schools in lieu of the California Distinguished Schools Program, which is on hiatus while the state creates new assessment and accountability systems. Schools applied for the award based on a model program their school has adopted that includes standards-based activities, project strategies, and practices that can be replicated by other local educational agencies.

In Tulare County, only UPHS, Orosi High School, Dinuba High School and Harmony Magnet Academy (Strathmore) received a Gold Ribbon Award. UPHS, Orosi and Dinuba High Schools also received a Title I Academic Achieving School Award. Additionally, Dinuba High School received an exemplary Career Technical Education Award.

"Receiving the Gold Ribbon Award is a tribute to the hard work of the teachers and staff at University Preparatory High School," said UPHS Principal Eric Thiessen. "This award is evidence of the culture of teamwork at our school. Each member of the team has a large impact on what we do for students as we prepare them for college and their future."

The UPHS leadership team accepting the Gold Ribbon Award from State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson (center) are (l-r) Nicole Rocha, Educational Options administrator; Sarah Pennington, counselor; Eric Thiessen, principal; Dr. Guadalupe Solis, deputy superintendent of Instructional Services; and Helen Milliorn-Feller, lead teacher.

For more information on UPHS, including information nights for parents interested in enrolling their children, contact Eric Thiessen at (559) 730-2529.

County Signs Tentative Agreement with SEIU

Kermit Wullschleger

A tentative agreement was reached between the County of Tulare and Service Employees International Union Local 521 (Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 & 7) representing about 2500 Tulare County employees.

In 2014, the County of Tulare negotiators went several months of offering employees zero compensation and offered the first raise since 2008 of 3% (one-year contract that expires at midnight of June 30, 2015).

The County of Tulare is now offering 3% for one year (2015-16) and 1% for the second year (2016-17).

The bargaining team is led by SEIU employees Jo Ann Salazar, chief negotiator, and Mark Arabia, field representative with eight Tulare County employees including Greg Gomez, Lena Case, Janet Baker, Stephanie Souza, Beverly Davis, Linda Castillo, Ty Inman and Kermit Wullschleger.

"Tulare County employees have not fully recovered from the wage stagnation of 2008-2013, but we are finally starting to move in the right direction with the recent offer from County of Tulare," Salazar said.

As stated above, the contract offer is a two-year term from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2017. It includes a 4% base wage increase (3% year 1 and 1% year 2).

The agreement is effective upon membership ratification and Board of Supervisors (BOS) adoption.

If the agreement is ratified and adopted by the BOS, employees in the above stated bargaining units will receive their first 3% base wage salary increase effective July 12, 2015; and a second 1% salary increase on July 12, 2016.

Additional highlights of the agreement include:

- Any increase in employee benefit plan premium will coincide with benefit amount.
- The sick leave buyback plan reinstated one year ago will remain an active program in calendar year 2016 and 2017 under the same condition of 2015.
- Personnel Rule 5 and 10 are modified to provide greater flexibility in the transfer of positions with Tulare County.

The County of Tulare has made a decision to provide a financial offer to the employees union timely versus last year's negotiation that resulted in County of Tulare refusing for several months to make any offers and finally making an offer of 3% but eventually bringing a lawsuit against the employee's union, Service Employees International Union.

Of further interest, the County of Tulare has decided to appeal the Public Employee's Relation Board (PERB) recent ruling, finding that, in 2011, the County of Tulare had wrongfully denied step and merit pay increases to about 1,000 county workers. The county was ordered to pay back wages with interest.

On or about March 30, the County of Tulare filed an appeal of the PERB decision ordering the county to pay back employees monies owed as a result of wrongfully denying step increases. The county has until June 12 to file their opening brief presenting their argument against the recent PERB decision. The employees union will have until July 17, 2015 to file a response.

The county will have 25 days after the employee's union response to file a closing brief.

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Agriculture

Eradication Program Celebrates 15 Years, and More Work To Do...

Tricia Stever Blattler
Executive Director, Tulare County Farm Bureau

The average backyard gardener probably does not spend a lot of time worried about the major diseases of grapes, citrus, tree fruit, nuts or vegetables crops here in the Valley, but all of us with backyard ornamental trees or even small acreage groves should be concerned and can be a big help in our fight against some of the toughest pests and diseases our agriculture industry has to encounter.

To name one such success story… it's hard to believe that 15 years ago the Pierce's Disease and Glassy Winged Sharp Shooter Research (PD/GWSS) Board was introduced. Fortunately grape growers came together from all around the state to form a powerful partnership aimed at managing this pest and disease. The chairman of the PD/GWSS Board reports remarkable results, that several successful field trials have passed into a second phase towards developing the first ever Pierce's Disease resistant wine grape vines. This in turn will help our grape industry continue to thrive and produce healthy crops that can be turned in to wines, table grapes and raisins for all Californians to enjoy.

Since 2001 the PD/GWSS winegrape assessment has been the primary research funding source to address the threats of the disease and pest. More than $20 million has been funded through government agencies and $3 million coming direct from the industry, which has led to the development of a statewide nursery inspection program to prevent the spread of the pest, area-wide management programs to protect grapevines in GWSS infested areas. Grower-funded research that has led to several possible solutions to the disease.

As we celebrate the success of this effort, we must now turn to being vigilant in the next major threat to our region, the Asian Citrus Psyllid pest and the disease that it vectors, known as Huanglongbing. Area wide treatment management programs, quarantines, and industry assessment funding is coming together here, as well as the pest continues to spread rapidly through our citrus growing regions. Right now California citrus growers are contributing more than $15 million dollars annually to fund eradication and research programs associated with this pest, it is one of the deadliest threats known to citrus throughout the world today.

In Southern California the pest has already spread through many counties, and quarantines and treatment protocols are being rigorously enforced. Here, where nearly 25 percent of all of California's fresh citrus is grown in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley, we are well aware of the issue but have not been on the front lines like Ventura, San Diego and Imperial counties. But the battle is coming to our county and to this region, and every one of us with any form of citrus or other host plant in our front or backyards must be vigilant in helping keep this threat at bay.

The California Department of Food and Ag's Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention program has many outreach efforts going on and is working to coordinate urban outreach to backyard citrus growers, who may pose one of our greatest threats in allowing this pest to spread here locally. We need to continue to increase awareness here locally of this damaging pest and devastating disease which can and will cripple our citrus industry if not stopped.

Many resources exist to help backyard growers of citrus, as well as commercial growers learn more about the Asian Citrus Psyllid and its risks to our citrus industry. With nearly 60 percent of all households having some form of ornamental citrus growing in their yards, we have to act very swiftly to help our urban neighbors learn why this threat is so great to our commercial groves and how we all must help take charge of eradicating this pest.

If you are a commercial grower and haven't already subscribed to Citrus Insider, this useful website and newsletter will provide a host of resources on ACP, sign up today at: www.citrusinsider.org.

If you are an urban or suburban gardening enthusiast and grow any types of citrus trees in your yard, we also hope you will keep watch for this nasty pest, and find out more by visiting www.californiacitrusthreat.com. Remember too, to always buy your citrus tree stock from a certified nursery facility, and be very cautious about moving any plant material, leaves, stems or other citrus plant material from a quarantined area (like Tulare County) to another part of the state.

If you believe your citrus tree may be host to the Asian Citrus psyllid or has symptoms of illness you wish to report, you may contact this CDFA hotline for assistance 1-800-491-1899.

Commentary: We Must Communicate Facts About Water Use

Mark Jansen, CFBF

The headlines have been unavoidable. Almonds have been painted as our state's "thirstiest" crop, but what these stories lack is context. The management team from the Blue Diamond Growers cooperative has been collaborating with industry experts to communicate the facts about agricultural water use to the media and our urban neighbors.

According to a recent editorial in the San Jose Mercury News, "California's dams and reservoirs were never envisioned to release water year-round for environmental objectives such as aiding the delta smelt or reintroducing salmon in the San Joaquin River watershed. A majority of reservoir water once intended for households or farming is simply sent out to sea."

Clearly, our solution to California's water situation will require a collaborative effort among all Californians to find a solution that makes sense for everyone.

The drought debate continues as we enter the hot, dry summer of the Central Valley, with mandatory water restrictions now in place throughout our state. For many Californians, that means the drought will now affect their day-to-day lives. Millions of urban Californians will have to join agriculture in the fight to save water and push for storage to protect our future. Gov. Brown's mandate made it clear that all Californians need to do their part to conserve our most precious resource, and yet the media firestorm aimed at agriculture, and almonds specifically, has been fierce.

Our message has been simple: All food takes water to grow.

California's agricultural abilities are second to none. In fact,

WATER on 16 »

Weather

Continued from p. 1

deep. It is attributed by many sources for some of the strange weather in the U.S. so far this year, including the heavy storms in Texas and Oklahoma. It was also cited as a source for Washington's milder than usual 2014 winter, according to the University of Washington's *Today*.

The "blob" is also being blamed for the loss of food supply chain for which emaciated sea lions have shown up on California shores.

Bond sees the "blob" remaining until at least the end of this year, according to *Today*.

But whether it offers any correlation to California's next winter weather is not really known, Dudley said.

"They're related," Dudley said of the various U.S. weather patterns, "but just how they are all related is really difficult to correlate."

Many forecasters are predicting an El Nino.

"An El Nino does tend to make the southern U.S. wetter," he said. "But it has to be an extreme El Nino to cause a wet winter here."

The last strong El Nino hit California in 1997-98.

But a strong El Nino could affect only one part of the country and not others, he said.

It will not be until September, October or even November until a winter forecast can be made with any possibility of certainty.

If the surface sea temperature at that time is five degrees Fahrenheit warmer than usual, we are looking at a strong El Nino with a wet winter for California, Dudley said.

If it is two or three degrees higher, then it is hard to say.

As for this summer, the South Valley is looking at pretty much normal summer weather, he said.

"The Pacific should shut off completely," Dudley said. "We were lucky to have a few storms in May that brought some showers (to areas of the Valley)."

We will slowly warm up after this week's cool down. Long-range predictions at this point are trending a bit higher than normal for the 30- and 60-day-outlook, he said.

It will be typically dry this summer.

Hanford

Continued from p. 1

preferably a kitchenette, and a place to hold meetings where they're staying. Among those making that point was Planning Commission Chair Steve Froberg, who then voted against recommending the change to the City Council.

Also voting against the recommendation were Vice Chair Dennis Ham and commissioners Anjer Nahal and Travis Paden. Voting to make the recommendation to change the zoning ordinance were commissioners Mark Fernandez, Richard Douglas and Michael Johnston.

Changing The Definition

As the ordinances stand now, hotels can be constructed outside the downtown area, but they cannot provide any kind of food service.

"We suggested approval to essentially merge the definition of inns, hotels and motels," said assistant planner Gabrielle de Silva. "When we get a request for a motel anywhere but downtown, we have to make them aware of the restrictions."

Mata said City Hall was not aware what chains were interested in Hanford. Motels are generally privately-owned businesses that join well-known franchises.

"They don't usually know what flag they're going to carry," Mata said.

Issue Going to City Council

Despite the vote of no-confidence, the suggested changes will still be presented to the City Council for the final say on the matter.

"It moves forward to the City Council regardless," said Mata, citing the June 16 meeting as the earliest the group could take up the issue.

The Council will also consider a system of incentives intended to encourage business growth downtown, she said.

Still to be considered by the Council and the Commission is the unusual status of the Cinemark 8 on Lacey Boulevard. Current zoning ordinances restrict theaters to the downtown area; however, the Cinemark 8 was constructed before the ordinance was enacted, leaving the facility in limbo should new construction be necessary.

"If something happened or they wanted to expand," Mata said, "they couldn't do that."

The two governing bodies will also be considering changes that would allow second branches outside the downtown for banks already operating there, allowing furniture stores to operate outside the downtown and allowing secondary uses inside established businesses.

COS Offers Summer Architecture Camp, June 15 to July 22

High school students interested in exploring how their creativity might lead to a rewarding career can attend the Summer Architecture Camp at the Tulare Campus of College of the Sequoias from June 15 to July 22. The 23-day camp will be held on Monday to Thursday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. The fee is $299 which includes all the materials that students need. To sign up, contact Laurel Garver at the Training Resource Center at (559) 688-3135. Space is limited to 25 students so parents are encouraged to sign them up early.

The camp is led by Rolando Gonzalez, M. Arch and COS professor of Architecture. Students will develop their sketching and drafting skills, and be introduced to methods for building models. No prior experience is required. encouragement.

Students who like art, painting, photography, building, design, jewelry making and using their imaginations to create unique projects will enjoy this camp. They will be introduced to possible career paths where they could apply their creativity. At the end of the camp, students will be able to keep their sketch pads and drafting kits. They will also earn Certificates of Completion.

Students who become intrigued by Architecture may decide to pursue their education in the COS Architecture program after graduating from high school, according to Louann Waldner, Dean, Career Technical Education. "COS' highly-rated Architecture program provides students with the skills they need to succeed in exciting careers," said Waldner.

COS Architecture graduates have won competitions, gone on to four-year university programs and secured employment with local firms.

"I'd highly recommend this COS Summer Architecture Camp to high school students," said Waldner. "They will be amazed how their creativity can be used in many careers. This hands-on camp can help students discover their passion and career paths." For more information about the camp and to learn about the COS Architecture program, contact Rolando Gonzalez, at (599) 688-3120 or rolandog@cos.edu, or visit cos.edu/architecture.

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Council Votes On How To Put An Item on the Agenda

Catherine Doe

During the Visalia City Council work session on Monday, June 1, the council discussed and voted on a policy for how a city council member can formally add an item to the agenda.

Until now, the procedure has been informally handled during the "items of interests" portion of the general meeting. The Council considered establishing a more formal process consistent with the Brown Act.

Formalizing the procedure for how a council member adds an item to the agenda did not include how a member of the public could do the same. There exist several paths for the public to get items on the agenda, but they are not well understood, and as a result not evenly applied to everyone.

At the city council workshop in January of this year, the council asked staff to bring back two options on how to add items to the agenda. City staff based these options on what they had learned from what other cities do and by what was allowed by the Brown Act. The two options presented during Monday's work session were:

- Option A – Consent Calendar Process: A city council member makes a request to the city manager that an item be added to a future agenda. If the item is received by the city manager prior to Wednesday noon of the week before the next council meeting, the city manager adds their request to the Consent Calendar. If the item is approved as part of the consent calendar it is then placed on the next agenda as a regular item.
- Option B – Council Member Items of Interest Process: A Council Member may, under "Items of Interest" on a City Council agenda, request a matter be placed on a future agenda. Council members can vote at that time whether to add the item to a future agenda.

During the work session discussion, the council was unanimously in favor of option A. This would end their current practice of requesting items to be added to the agenda during "items of interest." Council Member Amy Shuklian liked the idea of reviewing a possible agenda item with the city manager. Many times the city manager can resolve the issues without it going to the agenda and can also decide if the item is more appropriate for a work session or the general meeting.

A member of the public can also request an item to be put on the agenda, but the process is less formalized. For the public to get an item on the agenda they can bring it up during public comment, contact a city council member, or discuss it with the city staff.

When the public contacts a city council member they may or may not get a response. A city staff person said that if the individual gets no response, the member of the public may assume that none of the council members are interested in putting the item on the agenda. If during public comment, none of the council members look interested, that also may be seen as a "no" vote as far as getting your item on the agenda. It is not clear what happens when the public approaches the city staff with their agenda item.

But the public has been successful in getting items on the agenda. In regard to the chicken ordinance, Shuklian had heard discussions about raising chickens in residential areas for a few years. Then in the last month, three coworkers asked her why chickens were not legal in Visalia. She suggested to the city council during "items of interest" that it should be put on the agenda, and it was.

Shuklian did her civic duty and responded to her constituents. But what happens if you don't work with a city council member?

The pro-goat contingent rallies to be placed on the Visalia City Council agenda.

According to Gingi Freeman, this is what she has gone through to get an item on the agenda.

"I e-mailed all of the council members (April 26th) about a week and a half before the May 4 council meeting, asking if we could meet in person, and how I could get the goats on the agenda," she said. "I received no response.

"Prior to the first rally, upon receiving no response, I contacted each council members' offices to verify that they were indeed receiving my e-mails. I reiterated that I would like to speak about the goats and get them on the next possible agenda. This time I received e-mails from ALL of them, but just to say, 'Come to the meeting if you have anything to say.'

"We requested at the May 4 meeting that miniature goats be put on the next city council's agenda. We were directed to the City Planners who took a couple weeks to explain to us that we would have to pay to get it on the agenda via the $3598 application fee.

"Now I have been in contact with all of the council members explaining that I want them to do their job and put this on the agenda without the non-refundable extortion money.

"I've also asked them to be frank with me and let me know if they plan to take the nearly $4000 to get it on the agenda and then just shoot it down," she said.

Even though her group has collected 1250 signatures online, 520 of which represent people who live in Visalia, and her group has collected approximately 900 around town, she still cannot get the item on the agenda.

She requested one more time at the June 1 meeting that the goat ordinance be added to the next city council's agenda. She has not heard back.

To put the approximately 1300 signatures into perspective, in the 2013 election, John Crabtree secured a seat on the Visalia Unified School Board with 809 votes over his opponent David Alviso.

The 1300 people who took the time to sign a petition supporting an ordinance allowing mini-goats in residential areas expect to be acknowledged by the city council.

It is unclear what exactly the threshold of community interest has to be before a city council member decides to put an item on the agenda.

Tulare County Board of Supervisors Opt for No-Bid Process

Staff Reports

At the June 2 Tulare County Board of Supervisors meeting, item 17 of the consent calendar was pulled for separate discussion.

Amy Dickinson-Campbell, from the Real Mooney Grove Project, requested that the item be pulled so they could discuss why the well failure at Mooney Grove constitutes an emergency.

Dickenson-Campbell pointed out that the particular well in question has been failing since 2008 and that declaring it an emergency was just a tactic to sidestep the bidding process.

The Board of Supervisors (BOS) placed the item on the consent calendar in order to declare that the well failures at Mooney Grove Park, along with two other county wells, are in fact an emergency. By declaring an emergency the county can hire a contractor immediately to do repairs.

Mary Bryant and Amy Dickinson-Campbell, both of the Real Mooney Grove Project, have received through the Freedom of Information Act all of the county's past financial records and emails concerning the county parks. Over the last month their research has found many financial irregularities between the BOS, state grants, private companies contracted by the county and Neil Pilegard, head of Tulare County Parks and Recreation Department.

Because of the complexity of the financial transactions nothing yet has been made public or definitively proven. Bryant and Dickenson-Campbell allege that the county obscuring this item in the consent calendar and trying to avoid the bidding process is symptomatic of their lack of transparency and evidence of past abuse.

The following is Dickinson-Campbell's letter presented to the BOS at their June 2 meeting.

Despite Dickenson-Campbell's protestations, the board voted 5-0 to declare the emergency and proceed with hiring a private contractor to repair Mooney Grove's well.

Open Letter of Objection to Item 17 of the County Supervisor's Agenda for 2 June 2015, specifically where Mooney Grove Park is concerned.

In accordance with the California Public Contract Code and the Subletting and SubContracting Fair Practices Act the bidding process can only be bypassed in the event of an emergency, otherwise any projects exceeding a $10,000 minimum threshold were to have open contract bidding.

Where Mooney Grove Park is concerned, there is no emergency in 2015, that was not already present and required addressing in 1980. In accordance with line item 1(a) of the 2006-2007 Grand Jury Report (p3), it specifically states, "Moisture requirements were not being met to keep the trees in optimal health." This finding was from 1980 University of California Cooperative Extension Survey. The 2006-2007 Grand Jury Report also states in line item 2, p.3, "In 1987, 140 young Valley Oak Trees were donated to the park by Mr. Tony Montiero. (As of the writing of the 2006-2007 report) Most of the donated trees have since died.

Additionally, according to invoices uncovered through a California Public Records Act request (Freedom of Information Act request), CJ Hammer Machinery Company noted that in 2008, one well had completely gone dry; one well was nearly dry, and the remaining two pond wells were fine.

In 2014, an invoice was uncovered regarding the well that was nearly dry in 2008 showing that $13,162.43 was spent at Willits Pump (Wilits Equipment Company, Inc.) for parts to repair the pump.

As a matter of interest, a call was made to CJ Hammer Machinery about wells that were marked as dry or nearly dry in 2008, if they could have refilled themselves – and the Mooney Grove Park Wells were specifically mentioned in the question. The representative on the phone from CJ Hammer Machinery stated that refilling wells naturally is possible when the springs and aquifers are being replenished. As the central valley has been in a drought cycle since 2008, it is not possible for a well that was nearly dry then to have replenished itself.

As such, it is completely and totally IRRESPONSIBLE and INAPPROPRIATE to bypass the bidding process for Mooney Grove Park well repair and dig – since this has been a DOCUMENTED EMERGENCY for nearly three decades.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Dickinson Campbell, Secretary
for the Real Mooney Grove Project

Chickens

Continued from p. 1

that it was just a small, very vocal, and articulate minority in favor of chickens who attend meetings.

Nelsen said that there has to be a balance.

"I understand property rights, but I also understand neighbor's rights," he said. "What about my rights? I want to sit in my backyard and not smell a chicken coop."

Nelsen added that Visalia is not an ag-center but rather is surrounded by agriculture. Collins expanded on that theme saying that chickens and goats are not banned throughout Visalia. There are pockets of areas zoned Rural Residential where those who want to raise farm animals can live. Collins said that approving the chicken ordinance would open the door to approving other livestock, such as miniature ponies, pot-bellied pigs and geese.

Collins explained the decisions the council makes now sets the groundwork for how the city will look in the future. Visalia has evolved into a metropolitan area and has become "more city-like" and less farm-like. He also said that approving chickens into the city limits would purposely cause land use conflicts, and in Collins' 40 years as a city planner, he has seen many of them.

Collins emphasized that a city has rules and regulations to set the standards of how one conducts oneself. Nelsen echoed that sentiment by saying rules and regulations were put in place because not everyone does the right thing, and not everyone would keep the coops clean or abide by the four-chicken limit. He felt, as did Collins, that the city would pay the consequences if the council changed the ordinance.

There would be the need of increased code enforcement, and "code enforcement is maxed out," Nelsen said.

Link expressed the same concerns about code enforcement. Link said he received an email from Bill Huott, a Northside Community activist, who felt strongly against chickens legally in his neighborhood

Huott wrote, "some of the most blighted and previously dangerous abandoned properties included a chicken coup. I know, I have cleaned these up. To refer to them as a hazardous dump site is a mild description, simply disgusting."

Visalia's Code Enforcement Agency would be expected to deal with these out-of-compliance chicken coops on top of substandard housing, sewage leeks, homeless, gangs and sign ordinance among other duties, but with no extra staff.

Link also based his decision on the fact that he does believe that chickens smell and that they spread disease. Link said that "for some, his is the wrong decision but for others it is the right decision." When he took into consideration how this would affect the entire community he decided to vote no.

A cross section of Visalians, young, old, liberal, conservative, men and women, showed up at the planning commission hearing on May 11, to express their support for raising chickens in town. The same arguments were presented by just as diverse a group at the June 1, city council general meeting. The unifying theme between the different speakers was how our freedoms were slowly disappearing.

Equating taking prayer out of schools with denying residents the right to raise chickens on private property has united the liberals with the Central Valley Tea Party. The advocates spoke of the benefits to their garden, education for their children, and being an economical and healthy source of food. They also referenced studies confirming that chickens in residential areas do not spread diseases, but rather the industrial farms do.

The only new argument put forth in favor of the chickens in standard residential zones was presented by two young mothers. After insinuating that the council may be too old to understand the financial realities of raising a young family, one mother explained that living in the country, or in the rural residential zone, is not a possibility. She and her husband live on a military salary and living in the country or rural residential areas is too expensive. They want to be home owners but, as most people do not realize, rural homes are beyond the average person's budget. The proponents of individual property rights said that those who could only afford a home inside a residential zone should have the right as wealthier people living on rural properties.

Although the council vote is final this is just the beginning of the grassroots movement. The pro-goat and pro-chicken residents said the city council vote will chase away prospective home buyers from moving to Visalia.

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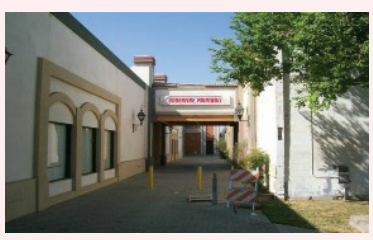

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Cal Water Gives Presentation on New Water Restrictions

Catherine Doe

California Water Services (Cal Water) gave a presentation during the Visalia City Council's June 1 work session about how to deal with the city's new water restrictions. The presentation outlined residential and business water allotments, surcharges and fines, and requested that council change watering days from three to two days per week.

Cal Water explained that enforcement does not start until the month after each customer has been informed of their water allotment. Each business and resident's water allotment should be outlined in their June bill, generally meaning enforcement starts in July. Customer's allotment is based on how much water their household used in June of 2013. Next month's allotment will be based on how much water each resident used in July of 2013 and so on. Cal Water then reduces each customers' usage by 32% and that is their water budget for the month.

If customers do not reduce their water consumption by 32% they will receive a fine. The fine comes out to $3.00 per one Ccf. One Ccf is the American standard unit of measurement for a volume of water or natural gas and is roughly equal to 748 gallons of water. So if a customer uses about 2200 gallons of water more than they are supposed to, that would be a $9.00 fine. Low-income water customers will only be fined half. The surcharges or fines will be included in the following water bill.

Customers can appeal their allotment online or have the application mailed to them. If the number of people in your household has increased or you have already cut significantly and cannot cut any more, you may qualify for an increased water budget.

In addressing how a resident should cut their use by 32%, Council Member Greg Collins brought up some interesting points. There are 40,000 residential apartment units in Visalia. With no lawn, and already installed low-flow toilet, Collins asked how apartment dwellers were supposed to reduce their consumption by 32%. A homeowner with a 1,000 square feet of grass could just turn off their sprinklers and cut their water use by half and not modify their standard of living at all. An apartment dweller cannot do that.

Cal Water did say that there is a minimum that each resident can use that they do not have to go under. That minimum was established for health and safety reason. A home that does not use water or very little is a health risk. There is no minimum for businesses. All businesses have to cut by 32% no matter how little water they use. Though they can call or fill out an application to appeal their budget.

For those who use under their allotted amount, they can bank it for future months. Banked water would then be accounted for before any fines were charged.

Not just individual residents, but the City of Visalia can get fined by the State Water Board (SWB) if Visalia does not succeed in an overall 32% reduction in its water usage, the SWB could fine Visalia $10,000 a day.

Scott Bailey, of Cal Water, said that the SWB prefers to work with cities to find solutions before imposing fines. The SWB looked at all cities' past water histories and used a nine-tiered system to determine how much each city had to reduce their water usage. Unfortunately the SWB did not take climate into account and all the Valley cities are all in the top tiers while the milder climate cities are in the lower tiers. Visalia is in the eighth tier.

For those who need to find information regarding their bill, customers can go online at calwater.com or call customer service number at 624-1600. By calling or looking online, customers can find their individualized monthly water budgets. Cal Water has set up a special customer service line just to handle any questions regarding the new and challenging restrictions.

Proposed Irrigation Schedule

- Two days per week

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Even street addresses	✓			✓			
Odd street addresses			✓				✓
No street addresses	✓			✓			

Lemoore Police Department POP Team Takes Pro-Active Approach to Law Enforcement

Nancy Vigran

It has been a month since the Lemoore Police Department's Problem-Oriented Policing Team (POP) unit has started patrolling, and so far it has been quite successful, said Corporal Mark Pescatore, a member of the team.

In less than 30 days, POP has made close to 10 arrests and seized two ounces of methamphetamines, he said.

Starting the POP team was Lemoore Police Chief Darrell Smith's idea.

"The chief was looking for something that would give a direct response to the community," Pescatore said.

The team is comprised of Pescatore and Officer Anthony Braly. The purpose of the team is to be proactive and to find "a more permanent fix rather than patch," to a problem area, Pescatore said.

The department is looking for the team to find potential problems before they escalate. And rather than responding to crime, POP is looking to prevent crime.

Pescatore and Braly were already serving the department as regular patrol officers. While the team is new, it comes with a reallocation of funds, and does not cost the department any additional money. It also comes with the backing of city council, Pescatore said.

The team does not work any particular hours, but rather when and where its work takes the officers.

"If there is activity at 4 o'clock in the morning, we will work then," Pescatore said. "If there is rash of burglaries during the daytime, than that's when we will work."

At this time, POP is dealing mostly with burglaries, vehicle theft and drug-related problems, which are often inter-related. They survey particular areas of the city and even particular homes, which require their attention.

For repeat offenders who are out on the streets again, the officers may not only have to deal with the criminals, but property owners as well. In Lemoore, there is an ordinance in which landowners are responsible for the action of their tenants. The police force actively enforces the ordinance. If a tenant is a continual problem for the community, Lemoore PD will contact the property owner. This also applies for ill-kept property, growing high in weeds, overrun with old vehicles and other dangerous or unsightly offenses.

It is up to the property owner to take action to evict their tenant or take him to court to resolve the problem, Pescatore said.

POP augments and supports regular patrolling officers, Pescatore said.

"It is up to us to look for the best solutions at hand," he said.

Mayor Lois Wynne feels the POP unit is a great thing for her community.

"My take on it, is that it is very positive," she said.

She appreciates that the POP unit can assist in both large and small crime including code enforcement, property issues and other nuisance-type of problems, she said.

"But, I also believe that we, as citizens, should see when something is not right," Wynne said. And then, alert POP.

"They are a real positive influence in the community," she added.

As with all Lemoore police officers, the POP unit encourages community members to call if they see a potential problem or witness a crime. Lemoore officers freely give out their cell numbers as well as the department number, and ask the community to let them know what is going on, while also being respectful to the officer's personal time and hour of the day.

POP is also proactive by visiting and speaking at service club meetings and other groups within the community, as well as those on the Lemoore Naval Air Base.

The direct line to the Lemoore Police Department is (559) 924-9574. Corporal Mark Pescatore can be reached at: (559) 997-9548. Officer Anthony Braly can be reached at: (559) 997-9560. In an emergency, call 911.

Supervisors Announce County Parks Advisory Committee; Seeks Members

Staff Reports

In an effort to create an opportunity for input on parks activities, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors has established the Tulare County Parks Advisory Committee (PAC). The Board of Supervisors is seeking qualified applicants for the committee designed to review current parks programs and offerings, as well as explore new revitalization options for our parks. The formation of the PAC was approved by the Board of Supervisors during the May 19, 2015 board meeting.

The County currently operates 10 parks throughout Tulare County including Mooney Grove Park in Visalia, Bartlett Park in Porterville, and Balch Park in the southern Sierra Nevada mountains. The vision for the PAC is to allow for interested members of the community to give input on parks matters and ultimately enhance the experience of parks users.

The committee will review activities, parks programs, improvement proposals and will make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors upon its findings. In addition, the Committee will have the ability to establish subcommittees or taskforces to study or advise the Board on specific parks or projects. PAC members will also have an important role in promoting the County's park resources, features and events in their communities.

"We are fortunate to have many parks spread throughout Tulare County and the Board wants to make sure that the public has an opportunity to voice their concerns and interest for these parks," said Chairman of the Board of Supervisors Steve Worthley. "This committee will provide that opportunity for the public and will ensure that we are continually looking at how we do business in our parks."

The PAC will consist of seven members; five members each nominated by one member of the Board of Supervisors. The remaining two members will be the President of the Tulare County Historical Society and the Parks and Recreation Manager. The Committee will meet quarterly and is expected to hold its first meeting in July/August 2015. It is expected that the first taskforce to be established will assist the County in developing an implementation strategy for the County's Mooney Grove 20 Year Conceptual Master Plan, which was approved by the Board in early 2015.

The idea for the establishment of the PAC was first suggested by District Two Supervisor Pete Vander Poel and arose from a constituent meeting to discuss Mooney Grove Park.

"A county-wide effort to focus on our 10 different parks is very much warranted," said Supervisor Vander Poel. "The Committee will be responsible for keeping a close eye on our parks which is important for our constituency, especially for those living in unincorporated areas where access to safe activities and play areas is limited."

The County will be seeking applications through the Board of Supervisors office. Applications can be found online by going to Clerk of the Board's website at www.tularecounty.ca.gov/clerkoftheboard. For more information about the Parks Advisory Committee, call (559) 636-5005.

GOP

Continued from p. 1

Committee is a philosophical conflict between the established order and the Tea Party members of the Republican Party. Those in control seem reluctant to upset the order of things, she believes.

"We have the establishment," she said. "It's just like what's wrong with the (national) GOP."

Moore described the Committee as being too focused on fundraising and reluctant to discuss subjects beyond electing party candidates.

"It's supposed to be a public meeting, but you're just supposed to sit there," she said of the Committee's business meetings. "They don't do anything as a group except once a month."

Michele Moore

Just Doing Its Job

That, says Chairman Henderson, is exactly what the Committee is supposed to do.

"We have a very specific roll: One, register voters; two, get out the vote; three, raise money," he said. "We're not a debate society. Our job is to get Republicans elected. Voter registration is up. Donations are up. We made 130,000 calls for the elections."

Currently, there are three self-identified Tea Party members on the county's 22-member GOP Central Committee, Henderson said. Those members are elected on a two-year cycle, are given seats because they have run for a GOP office or are appointed by the body's executive committee as seats are vacated. Members may also appoint alternates to attend in their absence.

"We've been very careful to have equal representation," Henderson said.

Moore Passed Over

However, when an elected member who failed to attend Committee meetings on a regular basis was removed and replaced as allowed by the Committee's bylaws, Moore was passed over for the seat.

"We asked James Henderson to appoint Michele Moore," Smith said. "The Executive Committee appointed someone else to that chair."

The appointment went to Anthony Ratekin, now chief of staff for Congressman Devin Nunes (R-Hanford). Smith said he had no issue with Ratekin's appointment, either philosophical or procedural, though he said he believes Ratekin may resign now that he has taken the job with Nunes' office. Henderson said Ratekin will remain on the Committee.

Smith said Moore was put forward for the seat because she has been an effective advocate in the past.

"Michele's been very active," he said. "She just gets a lot done."

Moore Supports Committee, Chairman

Moore said she has no problem with not being appointed. Her issue is an apparent lack of a conservative ethic on the part of those she labels as the establishment. Besides the Committee's lack of support for some GOP candidates, she also voiced frustration with the party's ready acceptance of Log Cabin Republicans, a fraction of the party made up of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender members of the GOP. Her main concern is that non-Tea Party Republicans on the Committee are not as concerned with maintaining constitutional rights as are Tea Party members.

"Our Tea Party isn't radical, like back East," she said. "Bring our freedoms back."

Still, she maintains support for the Committee and its chairman.

"Overall, they're not doing that bad a job," Moore said. "They're redoing the bylaws, so maybe there's change there. The chairman shouldn't have so much power. I like James, but I don't love him."

Moore stopped attending the Committee meetings regularly, but is still present when her schedule allows.

"I kind of quit going for a while," she said. "I felt like I was just a layperson."

Following the Law

Henderson said the review of the bylaws followed in the wake of the passage of Prop 14, which makes electing Central Committee members every two years cost prohibitive. Instead, the Committee is holds elections coinciding with presidential elections every four years. The change in bylaws, if it is made, would allow the Committee's executive committee to remain in power during the entire four-year term of office.

James Henderson

"Because of Prop 14, if we want to have elections every two years we have to spend a ton of money," Henderson said. "Consequently, we're doing it every four years. The reason we're going back (to review the bylaws) is to get the language fixed so ... we are as transparent as possible."

Regarding possible philosophical differences, Smith remains practical.

"We just have to work this through," he said.

Henderson says he will remain focused on the duties the Committee is tasked to perform.

"Our job needs to be putting pressure by getting good Republicans elected," he said. "We know there's always someone who's not going to agree, and that's fine."

Political Fix

Continued from p. 3

final stage before sainthood. To Americans, Arch Bishop Oscar Romero is unknown. To El Salvadorians, he is already a saint.

In the 1970's, Father Oscar Romero was a conservative priest who was appointed Arch Bishop to do the bidding of the El Salvadorian dictatorship. The Catholic Church was often used by Latin American dictatorships to buttress their regimes in undeveloped, poor countries. The Arch Bishop was expected to undermine the revolution happening in El Salvador, and propagate the idea that the rich were born to be rich and that the poor should not question God's will.

Well Arch Bishop Romero had a change of heart and didn't do the governments bidding. He preached that poverty was a social injustice that was perpetuated by the oligarchy, not God. He preached that social and economic injustice was not Christian and not accepted by the Catholic Church and needed to change.

For speaking the truth, Arch Bishop Oscar Romero was assassinated with one bullet to the chest by a government sniper on March 24, 1980 while giving Mass.

His beatification answered a few questions for me. First, that the universe craves the truth and the truth will always come out. After his assassination the government denied they did it, and his reputation was maligned by a faction of the Catholic Church and by those responsible for his assassination. Now he is on track to become a saint. How is that for vindication?

The second question that came to mind was: Would I have done the same thing? Arch Bishop Romero knew that, unless the revolution succeeded, the government would eventually assassinate him for telling the truth. I would step in front of an assassin's bullet to save my children's life, but would I step in front of an assassin's bullet to speak the truth about those less fortunate than myself?

It was the El Salvadoreans' absolute love for their priest, and the media's relentless pursuit of the truth, that proved to the world who really assassinated the Arch Bishop. It was also through them that he was finally seen for who he really was, a saint.

So I dedicate this issue of the *Valley Voice* to El Santo Oscar Romero. Reporting the truth is not only the least we can do in light of all those who have given their lives to tell it, it is our obligation. This is your newspaper.

NEXT DEADLINE:
11 June, 2015

Have you checked your sprinkler system lately?

A sprinkler system can waste water if sprinkler heads are broken, automatic timers are not adjusted for rain, or hidden leaks are not detected. Also, sprinklers that end up hitting the sidewalks or house waste even more water and violate water use regulations.

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New Lenders to Focus on Agribusiness, Large Commercial Loans and the Hispanic Business Community

Staff Reports

Following the recent announcement that it has raised $13.5 million in new capital, Suncrest Bank announced that it has hired three new loan officers to focus on Agribusiness, Large Commercial Loans and the Hispanic Business Community.

Mike Flynn

Mike Flynn joins Suncrest as manager of its Agribusiness Division focused on developing the bank's farming and agriculture portfolio throughout the San Joaquin Valley. Mike comes with a wealth of Ag Industry experience having previously held positions with Bank of the West's Agribusiness Group, Tomen Agro (now Arvesta Agricultural Chemicals) and Wells Fargo.

Scott Quatacker

Scott Quatacker has been appointed as Commercial Banking Manager for the Porterville Market where he joins a highly successful team. Scott was born and raised in Porterville, knows the local business community very well and will be focused on building the bank's commercial portfolio across all sectors. He previously held positions with Central Valley Community Bank and Bank of the Sierra.

Cesar Gutierrez joins Suncrest as Commercial Banking Manager covering the Visalia and Fresno Markets in particular but with a remit to grow the commercial lending portfolio throughout the South Valley. Cesar will also focus on developing the bank's profile and networks within the Hispanic Business Community. He previously held positions at Bank of the Sierra and Banco Popular.

Cesar Gutierrez

"The addition of these highly talented and experienced new managers reflects Suncrest's commitment to continued growth in our local markets, and our increased lending capacity," said Mr. Ciaran McMullan, president and chief executive officer. "Following our highly successful recent capital raise we are now able to offer loans up to $8 million to qualified borrowers, thereby significantly expanding the business we can confidently go after," said McMullan.

During 2014, Suncrest Bank grew its total assets by more than 49% and its loan portfolio by 33%, and is rapidly becoming one of central California's banking success stories, being in the top 1.5% of fastest growing banks in the country in 2014.

About Suncrest Bank Suncrest Bank, member FDIC, is locally owned and operated and offers a full range of business, agribusiness and personal deposit products and loans in the California's Central Valley. It has branches in Visalia and Porterville. It is regularly rated Five Stars by Bauer Financial and is dedicated to providing a high level of personal service, and to supporting the communities which it serves. It is also a Preferred Lender with the Small Business Administration.

Suncrest Bank stock trades on the OTCQX under the ticker symbol SBKK. For further information, visit www.suncrestbank.com

OPPORTUNITES

Don't miss out on this great opportunity to make a difference in our youths' lives. ProYouth and Visalia Unified School District are teaming up for a one day job fair with access to completing applications. ProYouth will be interviewing and offering contingent job offers. All job offers are subject to the successful completion of the pre-employment process. The job fair will take place at Green Acres Middle school on the corner of Houston and Mooney, Saturday June 13, 2015 from 10am to 2pm.

Please bring two forms of identification.

PROYOUTH

ProYouth is now hiring for after-school HEART, STEM, XL, and Edge Program Leaders. Get the chance to work with children and help change a child's life.

Part-time
Hour Range: 4-5 Depending on position

VUSD

The Visalia Unified School District is now hiring for classified staff. Get the opportunity to work with school teachers and staff to support our youth during day school hours.

Part-time Classified Positions
Hour Range: 2-5 Depending on position

HEART (HEALTH, ENRICHMENT, ACADEMICS, RECREATION, TEAMWORK) GROWBOTICS HIGH SCHOOL EXPANDED LEARNING XL EDGE

Briefly...

ASSEMBLYMAN MATHIS TO MEET WITH CONSTITUENTS IN TULARE

Assemblyman Mathis traveled to Washington DC on May 18 to discuss our county's dire water issues, especially in his hometown of Porterville.

He has been working with the California National Guard over the last two weeks to identify Tulare County, and in particular East Porterville, as a candidate for assistance under the Innovative Readiness Training program, or IRT, which is part of the federal Civil-Military Program. The IRT is designed to provide needed training for our troops while helping out American citizens.

"I am working with the National Guard," Mathis said, "to bring one of 30 well-drilling units into Tulare County in search of water sources. Currently there is a two-year waiting period."

Mathis was able to meet with several Congressmen and Senator Dianne Feinstein.

He will brief the community on whats happening with the water issues in the county as well as update us on his current legislation making its way through the legal process in Sacramento.

Mathis has 4 out of 5 bills under consideration. June 20th at 6 pm. 135 W Tulare Ave Tulare. Further information contact Dennis Smith 559-747-1223.

NEW SALES MANAGER ANNOUNCED AT SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY HOMES

Visalia-based residential builder San Joaquin Valley Homes announced today that Danny Garcia has been named as Vice President of Sales. Garcia brings over 21 years experience in real estate sales management, land development and construction, including 12 years exclusively in new home sales. Garcia will hire and train San Joaquin Valley Homes sales staff, reinforcing the company's philosophy of putting customers first and providing service that exceeds expectations.

"Danny Garcia has a proven track record of building professional sales teams that are committed to buyer satisfaction," states San Joaquin Valley Homes president, Joe Leal. "Danny knows what it takes to create a pleasant home-buying experience for our customers, and we are very excited to have him join us."

Garcia acquired his broker license in 2004, and will be the broker of record for San Joaquin Valley Homes.

He earned his GRI (Graduate Realtor Institute) Designation in 2010, and was previously employed with Century 21 Jordan Link & Company in Visalia where he managed a staff of over 90 real estate agents.

San Joaquin Valley Homes was established in 2013 by Joe Leal, Randy Merrill, and Jim Robinson, bringing together over 75 years of experience in residential development and construction.

The firm has six communities in Corcoran, Hanford, Tulare and Visalia. Its much anticipated San Marino neighborhood recently celebrated its grand opening in northwest Visalia.

For more information, visit SJVhomes.com or call 559 732-2660.

Changes At Kaweah Delta to Take 10 Years

Dave Adalian

For the last five months, Kaweah Delta Medical Center has been at full capacity, and the trend isn't going to change any time soon.

With the Kaweah Delta Health Care District poised to replace its acute-care beds at the aging, seismically unfit Mineral King Wing, the time seems ripe to KDHCD's leadership for expanding its crowded main campus.

"It's not just about replacing the building," said KDHCD CEO Lindsay Mann, referring to the January 2030 deadline for bringing Kaweah Delta into compliance with state law intended to keep medical services going in the aftermath of a severe quake.

There is a second, equally pressing problem. As the county's main medical center continues to add and expand programs, such as its neurology, trauma and perinatology departments, it is generating greater traffic from surrounding communities where such services simply aren't available.

"These things create demand from the entire region," Mann said.

He also believes patients, their families and friends can see for themselves the improvements at the hospital that led to receiving an A-rating in safety from the Leapfrog Group in its 2014 survey.

"It very powerfully effects what happens here," Mann said of the rating and steps taken to achieve it. "Trust and confidence are emerging, from which comes preference. It's much more powerful than meeting the law."

Outdated Building No Longer Enough

The law in question, SB1953, requires KDHDC's emergency and acute-care departments be housed in buildings strong enough to withstand a major earthquake. The Mineral King Wing, originally opened in 1969, simply cannot do that. With that in mind, the district is poised to begin a 10-year construction project that will bring it into compliance and change the face of downtown Visalia.

At least two years of planning and two more for the state to approve those plans will pass before the first shovel moves earth between Acequia and Mineral King avenues. Yet, the general framework for those sweeping changes is already in place. It starts with tearing down what's already there.

Ultimately, the hospital intends to construct a new tower, one at least as tall as the six-story Acequia Wing that opened in 2009. That new tower will occupy the land adjacent to the Acequia Wing, west of what remains of Floral Avenue, and extending all the way to West Street. That means the buildings there now -- the hospital's former imaging center, a pair of office buildings also owned by KDHCD, as well as Checkers Charbroiled Burgers and the former Taco Bell now occupied by Doc's Drive-In -- will all have to come down.

"When we start construction, Doc's and Checkers go," Mann said. However, he stressed the razing of the eateries is still years away, and worries the public may think them already closed. They aren't. "We want to be careful about that."

How The Changes Will Happen

The first stage of expansion will see the newly cleared land turned into much needed parking; but, that move is only short-term. When state approval and voter-backed funding are secured, the real construction will get underway with a ground-floor expansion that will surround the already standing Acequia Wing. To do that, what remains of Floral Avenue south of Acequia will be erased, and Mill Creek will be covered over. That ground-floor expansion will eventually provide the footprint for a tower at least six stories high.

While that's going on, a pair of side projects will also be underway. The expanded hospital will need expanded parking and more energy. The hospital hopes to meet that first need with a multistory parking structure, perhaps taking over the existing parking areas stretching along the north side of Acequia between Floral and Willis streets, bridging over West Street in between.

"But, that's not defined," said Mann. "We don't know that this is where it will be."

The second need, the ability to generate its own power at a significant savings, will be met with an expansion of KDMC's co-generation plant on West Street.

Must-Have Changes

The expansion, Mann stressed, will provide only "absolute necessities" the medical center needs to continue providing services beyond the 2030 cutoff. Changes must be made, he said, but nothing superfluous will be included.

"We're looking at making sure everything we expand is needed," Mann said.

They'll also be trying to save the district and taxpayers as much as they can along the way. To that end, studies will be made to see if the aged Mineral King Wing can be put to new use.

"We'll be studying that over the next 14 years," said Mann. "Would it be cost effective to repurpose it?"

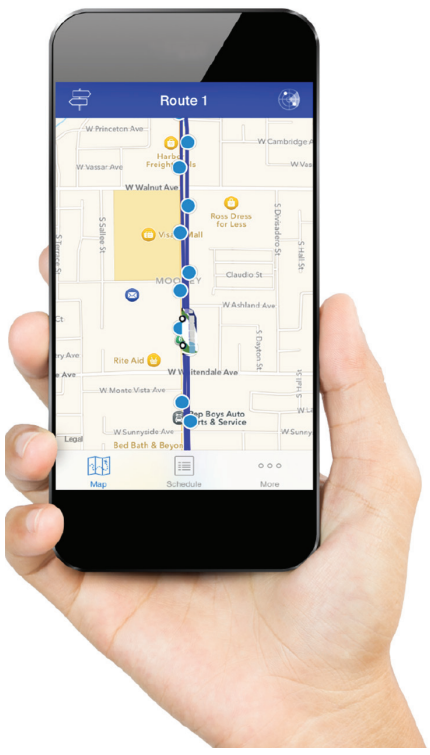
At issue are compliance with current building codes and the Americans with Disabilities Act, and questions of logistics, such as accessibility. Fixing and updating the old building to new purpose could prove exorbitant.

"The pragmatic utility of a repurposing project will be the cost," Mann said.

Visalia Transit Launches its First Transit App

Staff Reports

Visalia Transit launches first transit app in the Central Valley, in real-time, which provides riders with a new customer service experience and makes commuting with Visalia Transit a breeze. Never miss a bus again!



The innovative app will have the following features:

- Know when your next bus is arriving in real-time. You can even schedule a notification for the upcoming bus that will arrive.
- See exactly where your bus stops by using the map tab.
- The schedule tab displays the timetable for the current route.
- Tap the sign post to select your route.
- If the bus is running late or there was an accident on your route, the news and alert feature will notify you.
- How much is my ride? Fares rate information will be available on the app.
- News and Alerts

"Today, we take a tremendous leap forward for our riders. It will totally change our riders experience with us and provide them instant access to the information they need most. Visalia Transit puts the 'app' in happy," said Monty Cox, Visalia Transit Manager.

Visalia Transit operates 12 bus routes that serve Visalia, Farmersville, Exeter, Goshen, and Tulare.

Visalia Transit connects with Tulare InterModal Express, Tulare County Area Transit, Kings Area Regional Transit, Greyhound, Orange Belt, and Amtrak.

About Visalia Transit

Visalia Transit is dedicated to operating environmentally-friendly and convenient public transportation to, from and within the communities of Visalia, Goshen, Farmersville and Exeter.

Visalia Transit strives to encourage mobility and independence for those who would otherwise be without transportation, alleviate traffic congestion and enhance the quality of life.

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Viewpoint

Assemblyman Devon Mathis on Memorial Day Remembrance

Growing up, Memorial Day was spent at my great grandfather's tombstone in the Porterville cemetery.

We reminisce about his time as a submariner during his service, in particular, his being in Pearl Harbor on that day of infamy December 7th, 1941. I grew up listening about my grandfather and his service to our country and what that meant to him.

As we placed the small American flag on his grave, something we did every year, we could watch, and hear the bugler play taps.

It was our way to remember not just my grandfather but also all of the men and women of this great country that paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

It is the heritage I grew up with and was the driving force behind my decision to enlist in the California National Guard.

As my time in the guard grew so did my understanding, my reverence for Memorial Day grew and the observance meant more and more. I myself, on more than one occasion, almost paid that ultimate price.

During both of my tours in Iraq my truck was hit by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). It is why I have a Purple Heart, but I was one of the fortunate ones, I survived.

During my time in Iraq I had men under my command and while we were often in tight scrapes, I was blessed that all of my guys came home.

However I knew many that did not.

Over the course of the past 240 years, from the beginning of the American Revolutionary War to the current Global War on Terrorism, more than one million American service men and women have bravely laid down their lives for our safety and freedom.

By recognizing the contributions of those service members, we can ensure their deaths were not in vain. One of the most important things we can do this Memorial Day is to teach our younger generation about the sacrifices made by our fallen heroes.

Our world is safer and more peaceful because of the legacy of service, duty, and sacrifice that has been left behind.

The incredible strength of our bereaved military families is a source of inspiration for us all.

On Memorial Day, we also offer our comfort and support to the families and friends of those American service members who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

We also remember those who went missing in action and have not yet returned home. By keeping their memory alive and showing appreciation to their relatives, our Memorial Day celebrations can have greater significance.

Goat Restrictions: "Unethical Chokehold on Basic Human Rights"

I am requesting – once again – that the council work with us to amend the ordinance against miniature goats within the city limits. This issue goes far beyond a right to own pets, and instead is a matter of restoring Visalians God given rights to FOOD FREEDOM, PROPERTY RIGHTS and RIGHT TO PRIVACY.

Releasing this unethical chokehold on basic human rights and lifting this overbearing, overreaching and outdated ordinance that flies in the face of property rights and food freedom is just common sense.

The baseless fearmongering and condescending class warfare mentality that says that allowing small useful domestic animals will turn the city into an out of control farm is deceitful and misleading. The city is perfectly capable of setting large and dangerous animal caps, and enforcing existing ordinances that would protect the community from noise, health or trespass concerns.

Cities throughout California and the US allow backyard chickens and miniature goats, with no ill effects in their communities. They are educational, environmentally friendly, and quiet. Licensing chicken coops and mini goats, or issuing food producing animal ordinances will be no more difficult than existing licensing requirements for dogs and cats - and will bring in additional revenue to the city to offset any minimal costs which may be incurred.

Responsibly owning productive, eco-friendly animals on your private property should not be a hot button issue these days, especially in this rich agricultural breadbasket to the world.

There is a growing group of individuals in Visalia, myself among them, who out of necessity or personal conviction are determined to lead the charge in fighting for our God-given rights to self-sufficiency and self-reliance on our private property. Goats and chickens are an excellent food source for families trying to save money or avoid store-bought, processed foods and Visalians by and large support food freedom.

I invite each of you on the city council to work with us in developing an ordinance that will legalize backyard goats and chickens, and we ask that you – once again – to listen to the citizens of Visalia and put this issue on an upcoming city council meeting agenda.

Visalia is watching and anxiously looking to our elected officials to see how they will vote and where they will stand on these issues. Never before have I seen a community so aware of city council happenings and more familiar with council members names and actions.

Trust me, when a family that is struggling to put food on the table - or in my case, milk in my daughters belly – sees council members vote FOR chickens and miniature goats or AGAINST avenues of self-sufficiency and food freedom, Visalians notice.

As quoted in a Valley Voice article concerning recent allegations of gerrymandering, a Council Member was quoted as saying, "What is best for the city is at the heart of every decision made by all the council members.""

Well here's the thing… YOU don't decide what's best for us. WE THE PEOPLE decide what's best for us.

And what is best for Visalians is less pointless government intrusion and control. Whether it's control in the form of trivial matters like signs in shop windows or serious matters criminalizing food producing animals on private property, every day citizens rights are being undermined by government officials that think they know better than we do how we should live our lives and care for our children.

The City of Visalia should be enabling its citizens to lawfully provide for their families nutritional needs. I urge the City of Visalia to put the needs and rights of its citizens first, take a stand for food freedom, and start the process of amending the ordinance against chickens and miniature goats.

Gingi Freeman

"Using An Elected Government Position to Promote ONE Particular Brand of Christianity"

Marguerite Melo

Let me start by saying this writing is not a discussion on which religion is more Godly or who will be ascending into Heaven and who will fall into the pit of despair. That is a debate that has been waging since the beginning of time and continues to this day. This is also not a thesis on whether all the Founding Fathers were good Christians. Some were. Some, not so much. Some were even Deists. Rather, this is an editorial about the propriety of using an elected government position (Sheriff) to promote ONE particular brand within Christianity, to the exclusion of all other religions.

For those of you who may have missed it, last month, the annual Visalia Prayer Breakfast was held in downtown Visalia. As usual, various business, civic, and government officials were in attendance. Most of the government officials had the good sense to not wear a uniform to the religious event. The Sheriff's department seemed to not "get the memo" that mixing religion and government never ends well.

There is no problem with the Sheriff, or anyone else for that matter, attending a prayer breakfast, or any other religious event, in his or her PRIVATE capacity. But when you show up in the uniform of the Sheriff's Department, with 4 or 5 high ranking officials in tow, also in uniform, a message is clearly sent to the public and the department's employees that the Sheriff's Department (or at least its elected leadership) endorses and supports THIS particular religion, to the exclusion of all others.

What is an employee or member of the public in such an environment to do? Abandon long held religious beliefs (or none at all) in an effort to curry favor with the current political leadership? Hope that by joining up, law enforcement might "go easier" if a potential criminal subject is a member of the same church?

Our Founders did not want excessive entanglement between government and religion for obvious reasons. Consequently, they put protections into the Constitution prohibiting religious tests for holding office, prohibiting interfering with the free exercise of religion, and prohibiting the establishment of a religion. The Courts have taken these ideas and created the legal doctrine of "separation of church and state." Those prohibitions have served us well for these past centuries. This country has been fortunate to have avoided most of the religious strife that plagues Europe and other parts of the world.

Drip by drip, the Sheriff's story about the prayer breakfast has changed. Paraphrasing, fIrst, it was "I merely attended." Then, it was "well, I said the pledge of allegiance, and then left." Next, it was, "well, Ok, I said the pledge of allegiance and lead a prayer, but that's it."

It would have been better if the Sheriff could have said, "Yes, of course I went. I, along with my command staff, were off duty, we paid our own way, and we were in civilian clothes." But of course, they can't say that because it isn't true.

I'll leave you with a quote that sums up the Sheriff's predicament more eloquently than I ever could:

"Christianity may be good and Satanism evil. Under the Constitution, however, both are neutral. This is an important, but difficult, concept for many law enforcement officers to accept. They are paid to uphold the penal code, not the Ten Commandments … The fact is that far more crime and child abuse has been committed by zealots in the name of God, Jesus and Mohammed than has ever been committed in the name of Satan. Many people don't like that statement, but few can argue with it."

Carl Sagan, The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark

Melo is a partner with Law Offices of Melo and Sarsfield, a firm providing legal services to the Central Valley and the Coast in the area of civil rights, employment law and criminal defense. She has been practicing law for more than twenty years and is a Catholic.

Columns & Letters

> as a democrat who was born in Visalia in 61' but moved to Fresno 2yrs I love the valley voice. I know it's a business newspaper and their mostly republican like Visalia & Tulare co is but that's ok. I like Catherin Doe's articles and I like to know what's being built but the election of 2016 is over. The question is by how much Hillary Clinton is going to win by. The republicans are becoming a circus just by the number of candidates and this country is not going back to the Bush's. I like how you guys have taken on the Times-Delta. To me it doesn't matter where the editor lives. The quality of the reporting does. The same old people keep getting re-elected in Visalia & Tulare co when the gangs run the town & county today, drugs everywhere & crime. Everybody should have been voted out of office years ago and high unemployment and they all get big money & pensions and claim to be republicans.
>
> — ***timothybianco,*** *on* ***A "Mental Basket Case of An Editor"***

> Pam Mayo is absolutely right 100 % I recently met friends at THE END OF THE TRAIL for the statue's 100 Birthday Dead animals were floating in the water around the statue The day before on Saturday DEAD ANIMALS floating in the lagoon And NO WONDER GROUNDSKEEPERS AT MOONEY GROVE come to work late and leave early laughing as they watch TV and talk on their phones joking they don't have to work cuz it's a county job THEY DON'T HAVE A SUPERVISOR WHO ACTUALLY WORKS EITHER
>
> — ***Mary Bryant,*** *on* ***Supervisors Respond to Report on Mooney Grove***

> A minor correction: The CA Voting Rights Act was passed way back in 2001. Former VTD editor James Houck (spelled with a "c") was never involved in the process of election reform. He did write two critical editorials and a commentary in early 2012 when I brought to his attention that the consultant/demographer (NDC) had been hired by the city at a non-public meeting, in violation of the Brown Act.
>
> — ***Renee Lapin,*** *on* ***Visalia City Council Chooses Voting District Map***

> Dear Devon,
> Thank you for standing up for parents rights in the SB 277 controversy!! Thank you from a concerned grand parent!!
> Terri Iantosca
> PO box 699
> Tulare, ca 93275
>
> — ***Terri Iantosca,*** *on* ***Assemblyman Devon Mathis Democratic Opening***

Life After High School

High school; a time of confusion, drama, and just a bit of awkwardness. But it's not just that, it's also a time to think about what one wants to do with their life afterwards, in the future. The question is, though, what do teenagers want to do after high school? It may be a silly question to ask while we are only aimless teenagers shooting in the dark, but some of us seem to be shooting for the stars instead.

We go to school every day, see the same faces every day, it's a non-changing environment sometimes. So when it comes close to the time of graduation and people are asking us what we want to do with our lives, it can be difficult to respond. How are we supposed to make sudden life choices when we have to ask permission to even go use the restroom? Luckily, most of us have an idea of what we want to pursue, so once it comes to graduating, we won't be fully freaking out.

When asking teenagers at Exeter Union High School the simple question, "What do you want to do with your life after high school?" many had mixed emotions and were uncertain about the topic. One sophomore said, "I plan on going to a four-year university and majoring in journalism. I would love to have a job I can explore the world and let the voices that can't be heard to be yelled for the world to hear." Now if that isn't a set goal for a sophomore, I don't know what is!

Another sophomore said, "I don't know what I want to do with my life. There are so many things to do in the world and making a wrong choice and going to college for four years to learn something that I will end up hating is scary because you only have so much time and I don't want to spend it doing something I don't enjoy." Also a very good point, and rather deep coming from a sophomore's prospective.

A freshman girl who chose to stay anonymous said, "I plan on working for the summer, and then attending two years of college at Brigham Young University. If I'm not married by then, I plan on going on a mission for a year and a half and then continue my education. I plan on becoming a book editor because I love to read and write and I would be able to help others do what they love."

Who knew some teenagers could be so determined at such an age?

Mercedes Oldenbourg

Veteran's Corner

Who Is Eligible for Veterans Benefits?

Joe Wright

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CALVET) offer a wide range of benefits to our veterans and their families. You may be eligible for benefits if you are a veteran, veteran's dependent, surviving spouse or child or parent of a deceased veteran. Benefits come in many forms and are typically based on service-connected injuries/illnesses, or may be income based. Compensation is paid for service-connected injuries/illnesses, where as Pension is based on income. There is no time limit to apply for Compensation and Pension benefits.

VA Health care is available to veterans based on their service-connected injuries/illnesses, and also is available based on income. VA also provides free health care for veterans who served in a theater of combat operations after November 11, 1998, for any illness possibly related to their service in that theater. Eligibility for free health care is for five years from the date of discharge from active duty.

Additional Federal benefits such as Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment, Education & Training, Home Loans, Life Insurance, Dependents & Survivors Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), and Burial benefits are also available. State benefits such as the College Fee Waiver Program, CALVET Home Loan Program, State Veterans Homes, Fishing/Hunting Licenses, and State Parks and Recreation Passes are available. Additional benefits include employment and unemployment insurance assistance, business license/tax and fee waivers, property tax exemptions, and waiver of motor vehicle registration fees.

The key to receiving any of these benefits is, You Must Apply for Them! While you can apply on your own, your local County Veterans Service Office is there to assist you and your family. The County Veterans Service Office is trained and accredited with the VA and CALVET. You can find your local office by visiting the California Association of County Veterans Service Officers website at www.cacvso.org, then go to the "Contact Us" pull-down menu.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office issues Veteran I.D. cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Joe Wright if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents. To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com.

Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call 852-2669; or e-mail joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us.

Letter: Mooney Grove Health Hazard

Oh my - just read - this is so disturbing on so many levels. I really hope that Pam Mayo gets her vet bill reimbursed. What is wrong with this City - that they would allow this to happen?

Well, I surely hope your articles has gotten others up in arms over this and this Health Hazard is promptly taken care of. Thank you - yours is the only paper to read.

Sincerely,
M. Mayer

Send us your Letters to the Editor

By mail:
3350 S. Fairway Street, Visalia, CA 932777

By email: editor@ourvalleyvoice.com

On Facebook at facebook.com/ourvalleyvoice

Print replica edition at issuu.com/ourvalleyvoice

Water

Continued from p. 6

according to the California Department of Food and Agriculture, nearly half of our country's fresh fruits, nuts and vegetables come from California. And CDFA reports that from 1967 to 2010, California agriculture has increased revenue and decreased total applied water use by 20 percent.

In order to achieve such an impressive statistic, access to a consistent water supply is key. The amount of water required for California farming to grow our food is only 40 percent of captured water, with environmental projects taking the majority at 50 percent. The often-quoted 80 percent ignores any water used for environmental purposes.

I have read suggestions that agriculture has been let off the hook by the governor's mandate. Here are the facts: In 2014, farmers received only 5 percent of their contracted State Water Project allocation and 0 percent from the federal Central Valley Project. This year, farmers are projected to receive 20 percent of State Water Project allocation and again, 0 percent of CVP water. Our farmers have been feeling the effects of this drought from the very beginning.

Some have questioned whether agriculture's economic impact justifies the amount of water used by the industry. The media points to agriculture's 2.8 percent share of the state GDP, but again, this figure lacks context. It does not tell the whole story. Getting our food from farm to fork involves an interconnected supply chain, undoubtedly contributing significantly more than 2.8 percent to the state's economy. The almond industry alone contributes 104,000 jobs to California, 97,000 of which reside in the Central Valley, and more than 37,000 additional jobs throughout the supply chain.

Speaking of almonds, there are 9 million acres of farmland in California and almonds account for 12 percent of that total, while only using 8 percent of the water currently used for agriculture. Almond crops produce more than just the kernels humans eat, which provide an efficient source of a heart-healthy, plant-based protein. The almond crop also produces hulls and shells that provide feed and bedding for livestock animals. Almonds rank No. 1 in California for food exports out of the state, with North America consuming four times more almonds than any other market. Our industry is a global driver of $11 billion in economic activity for California.

In the last 20 years, California almond growers have reduced the amount of water required to grow a pound of almonds by 33 percent. Nearly 70 percent of almond growers use micro-irrigation systems and more than 80 percent use demand-based irrigation scheduling. No one in the world can produce a high-quality almond as efficiently as we can in California.

In times of crisis, there are people who look for someone to blame. Almonds were the first target. Through sharing a few facts about our water stewardship, the media tide has turned to more balanced reporting. As the weather continues to warm into the summer, I expect agriculture will continue to field questions from our urban neighbors about water. Rest assured that Blue Diamond is committed to collaborating with our industry peers, water and environmental experts, consumer groups, regulatory bodies and policy makers to establish a water policy that makes sense for all Californians—rural and urban, Central Valley and coastal, producers and consumers.

(Mark Jansen is president and CEO of Blue Diamond Growers in Sacramento.)

This article courtesy the California Farm Bureau Federation.

Career Pathways Trust Grants $10 Million to West Hills College

Staff Reports

West Hills Community College District is one of a handful of Central Valley colleges to be awarded a grant to blend academic and career technical education in a program designed to prepare California students for college and careers in the 21st Century.

The California Department of Education awarded $244 million in grants this week to 40 programs to connect employers with high schools and colleges and train students for jobs in high demand fields.

The grant to West Hills College, the lead fiscal agency in partnership with Reedley College, will focus on "science and math as it relates to the business of agriculture," said Carole Goldsmith, president of West Hills College Coalinga. Her college was home last year to a unique Paramount Ag Academy for students from area schools, a summer program that brought pupils to the college campus for classes and demonstrations intended to showcase careers in agriculture.

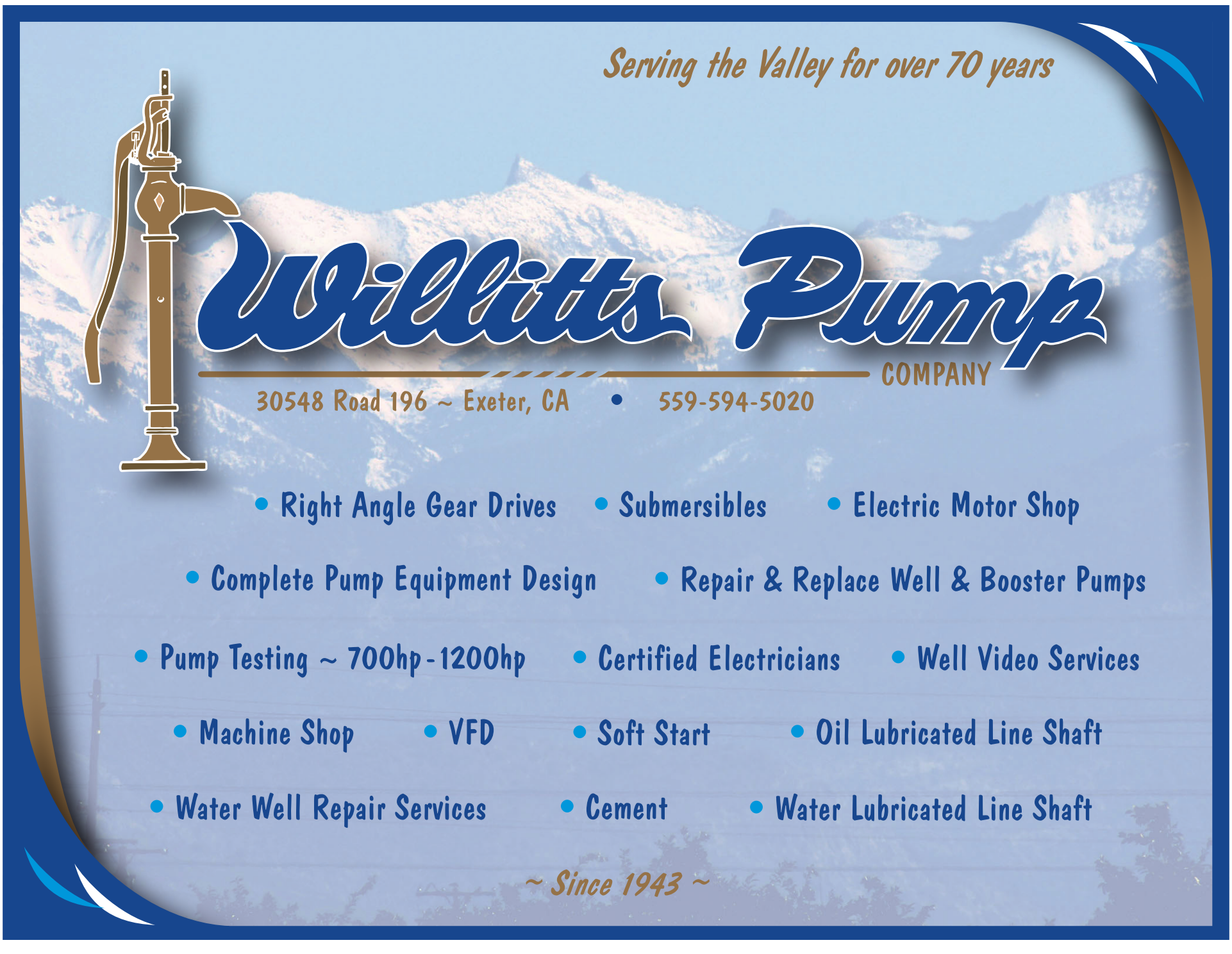
WHCCD will work with industry partners in the new program, including the Roll Global family of Paramount Farming and related entities, along with Olam International, Cal-Organics and Grimmway Farms. West Hills and Reedley will partner on programs to be offered in Avenal and Sanger.

The California Legislature passed the Career Pathways Trust Funds project in 2014 in order to establish regional collaborative relationships with business entities, community organizations and local institutions of postsecondary education.

The goal is "to develop and integrate standards-based academics with a career-relevant sequenced curriculum following industry-themed pathways aligned to high-need, high-growth or emerging regional economic sectors," according to a DOE press release.

West Hills College was the lead fiscal agency for a consortium of 11 colleges in the Central valley that won a $19.6 million award in 2011 to accomplish similar goals. Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, the three year initiative led to streamlined career technical training in healthcare and other fields where demand for workers was higher than the supply of qualified applicants. The awards are part of a national trend. Recently, tech giant Google, Inc., announced it would invest in a computerized farming network to crunch data on seeds and soil and help farmers grow more crops and save money.

Just last month, West Hill College hosted an Ag Hackathon at its Farm of the Future. Dozens of software developers converged on Coalinga and in two days developed useable mobile applications that will streamline the scheduling of watering and fertilizer application in order to enhance production and conserve resources for area farmers.



VALLEY VOICE
Valley Scene

The Graduate Comes to Visalia Stage

Nancy Holley

Visalia Players present the stage adaptation of the 1967 coming-of-age classic, *The Graduate* at the Ice House Theatre. The theatrical version premiered in London in 2000 to critical acclaim and was brought to Broadway two years later.

As with many college graduates, Benjamin Braddock is wondering what the future holds. He is not enamored by his father's plans for his future and is looking for diversions. He doesn't have to look far. Between his affair with Mrs. Robinson and falling in love with her daughter Elaine, his summer is anything but dull.

The cast includes newcomers to the Ice House Theatre and familiar faces. Christopher Dorado, who is portraying Benjamin, is debuting at the Ice House, but is no stranger to the stage. Dorado, a theater major, is part of the artistic company at COS.

"*The Graduat*e is a staple of American cinema. I was immediately intrigued when I learned the Visalia Players were doing the show," Dorado said.

Merina Amos (Mrs. Robinson) has been involved in a number of Ice House productions, most recently *Side By Side By Sondheim*. Amos described Mrs. Robinson as "a disillusioned women with a life of broken dreams and an empty heart."

"Mr. Robinson is a sexist business leader of the 60s with definite ideas about the roles of men and women," said actor Clark Hawley.

Returning to the Ice House after several years of travel, Hawley prefers the play's portrayal of Mr. Robinson "because he is a more interesting character in the stage version."

In her second show at the Ice House, Marisela Gomez is excited to have been chosen to play Elaine Robinson.

"She is the sunshine of the show, light hearted and sweet, despite the family dynamics that could have made her pessimistic," she said.

"Mr. Braddock is stereotypical of the 60s" quips Peter Sommers. "I make the money; this is my house; and I'm creating the family around me."

Jennifer Toledo sees Mrs. Braddock similarly. "She's a Stepford Wife. She smiles even when everything is not fine. She is mechanical."

Co-directors Henry Ralston (nee Gonzales) and Sergio Garza are very excited about the play and their cast.

Ralston noted, "I love it. It was one of my favorite movies, and the play is not very different from the movie. It still has the iconic lines that people are going to expect."

Merina Amos as Mrs. Robinson and Christopher Dorado as Benjamin Braddock.

On Sunday June 21 after the matinee, "Back Stage at the Ice House" will be hosted by Sharon DeCoux, a veteran Visalia Player. Audience members will have an opportunity for a behind the scenes look at the show and the opportunity to ask questions and interact with cast/crew.

The Graduate runs for three weekends at the Ice House Theater at Race and Santa Fe in Visalia. Evening performances are at 7:30pm on 6/12, 6/13, 6/19/, 6/20, 6/26, and 6/27 and matinees are at 2pm on 6/14, 6/21, and 6/28. Note: The play includes adult content.

To purchase tickets go to the Visalia Players' website at www.visaliaplayers.org, their Facebook page "Visalia Community Players", or call 734-3900.

Kings Fair Offers New Rides and Attractions

Staff Reports

A revamped Kings Fair offers new and different attractions June 11-14, along with a low admission cost, while hoping to draw on a larger crowd than in recent years.

The rodeo takes place on Sunday, June 14.

The Carnival, Cows and Corndogs theme brings a lot of new things including a new carnival with new and exciting rides, said Kate O'Neil, fair manager.

Also new, is the interactive Egyptian Pharaohs Wildlife Exhibit, which offers a hands-on, up-front and personal look at the mid-eastern country, its history and its critters.

Kids and adults will be able to handle snakes and scorpions, O'Neil said, and also come face-to-face with a porcupine, fennel fox, monkeys and more.

"Thanks to the fair's new foundation, we are able to afford this new exhibit," she said.

Another exciting event at the fair this year is the Dock Dog competition, where canines race and leap into the air to fetch off the dock and into the water. While competitive racers will be entered, novice local dogs are welcome to enter as well.

"We've mixed things up a bit," O'Neil said, "with one of the stages moved to a new location and other renovations including a newly painted entrance."

But don't worry, more traditional fair events will take place too, including tractor pulls on Saturday evening and sprint car racing on Friday evening. Fair mascot, Daisy the Moo, will be wandering around the livestock area, as well as the rest of the fairgrounds.

KINGS FAIR continued on **19 »**

Ceremony to Play the Cellar Door

Aaron Gomes

Ceremony will headline a Friday, June 12 Cellar Door show, with Tony Molina playing a middle slot and Creative Adult opening the evening.

Rohnert Park, California band Ceremony has built a strong following based on the power of their modern punk sound. On their new Matador Records album "The L-Shaped Man," the band has dug deep into decades past and have fully embraced their new-wave Joy Division roots.

The new album is definitely a breakup album. Breakup albums mark a turning point for a band: the moment when their sound completely changes and reaches a new level of emotional clarity. All that heartbreak and malaise condensed into any single record often makes for a defining piece of work, no matter the genre.

The best records explore the nooks and crannies of sadness, learning it inside and out — celebrating it. Singer Ross Farrar's recent breakup is used here as a platform to explore loneliness and emotional weariness, but it is by no means a purely sad album. Rather than look inward, Farrar uses his experience to write about what it means to go through something heavy and come out the other side a different person.

A band with as much credibility as Ceremony always tends to pull amazing bands along with them on the road. Such is the case with Los Angeles' Tony Molina, playing the middle slot of this show. He and his band urgently deliver short, fast and catchy punk gems.

San Francisco's Creative Adult kick off the night. The band has been gaining a lot of attention in Northern California and judging by the sounds of their recent releases, they'll be blowing the doors off the place with tons of energy and grit.

This is an early show--doors open at 6pm--open to all ages. Tickets are $10, and can be purchased at Ticketweb.com. The Cellar Door is at 101 West Main Street in Visalia.

Summer Latin Jam at Eagle Mountain Casino

Staff Reports

Eagle Mountain Casino welcomes El Chicano, MC Magic, Amanda Perez, Lighter Shade of Brown, Tierra and Malo on Saturday, June 13 for an all-inclusive concert at 8pm.

Rock in your seats to the sounds El Chicano, an American Chicano rock group from Los Angeles, whose style incorporates various modern music genres including rock, funk, soul, blues, jazz, and salsa. MC Magic is a Mexican rapper, songwriter and record producer, known for rapping and singing, both in English and Spanish. R&B singer-songwriter Amanda Perez is a record producer of Mexican descent and has the hits "Never" and "Angel" that made Billboards top 10 Hits.

A Lighter Shade of Brown is a Mexican American hip hop duo from Riverside, who best known for their 1990 hit single "On a Sunday Afternoon." Hailing from East Los Angeles is the band Tierra who is named "Best R&B Vocal Group" by four leading magazines including Billboard. Their music is a blend of rock, pop, jazz, R&B and salsa. The result is a Latin R&B rhythm which produced classics like "Together," "Gonna Find Her," "Memories" and "Zoot Suit Boogie". Malo is an American Latin-tinged rock and roll group with their top hit "Sauvecito" which has also been called the "Chicano National Anthem."

Tickets start at $30 and can be purchased online or in the Eagle Mountain Casino gift shop.

EAGLE MOUNTAIN CASINO

You-Pick Lavender Harvest Set for June

Staff Reports

Herbs and More in Farmersville, a horticultural-based day program for developmentally disabled adults, will hold two "you-pick" days during lavender harvest in June.

The "you-pick" harvests are Saturday, June 6, and Saturday, June 13 from 9am to 2pm on both days.

The Herbs and More program allows developmentally disabled adults from the Central Valley Regional Center to take part in planting and harvesting a wide variety of herbs and the production and packaging of products such as soaps, massage oils, soothing snugglers, warming slippers, shoe fresheners and lavender eye packs.

All funds raised go toward salaries for the individuals and product development.

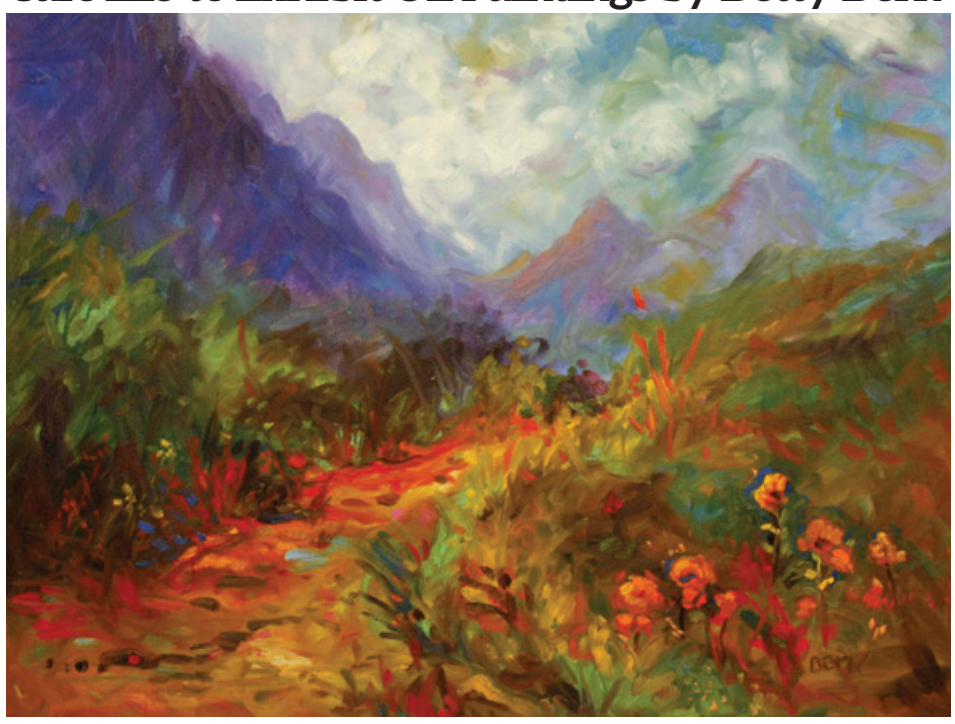
The Herbs and More program is overseen by Kathy Lewis, a developmental disability specialist, who operates two care homes for the mentally disabled along with partner Jody Graves.

"The goal of Herbs and More is to focus on each individual's abilities and not on their disabilities," Lewis noted. "They put care and pride into each product."

Products can be purchased at the Herbs and More location at 226 E. Front Street in Farmersville, Roots Floral and Salon in Exeter, Brooklyn Flowers and Gifts in Lindsay and LaBelle Winery in Terra Bella, or on line at herbsandmoreca.com.

The program members also show their handcrafted products at festivals, arts and crafts shows, and hope to be at several farmers markets very soon. For product information call 747-1101, or stop by the program at 226 E. Front St., Farmersville.

Cafe 225 to Exhibit Oil Paintings by Betty Berk



Purple Mountains, by Betty Berk

Cafe 225 will exhibit oil paintings by Betty Berk from June 8 through July and August. This is a one-woman exhibit. The art reception will be at 1 p.m. on Sunday, June 14. Betty's work is very colorful and shows a lively view of landscapes and colorful still life art.

Purchases are made through the artist and all contact information will be on the labels of the paintings. Betty Berk is an accomplished local artist, whose awards and exhibits are listed on her website www.bettyberk.com.

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Education

Career Pathways Trust Grants $10 Million to West Hills College

Staff Reports

West Hills Community College District is one of a handful of Central Valley colleges to be awarded a grant to blend academic and career technical education in a program designed to prepare California students for college and careers in the 21st Century.

The California Department of Education awarded $244 million in grants this week to 40 programs to connect employers with high schools and colleges and train students for jobs in high demand fields.

The grant to West Hills College, the lead fiscal agency in partnership with Reedley College, will focus on "science and math as it relates to the business of agriculture," said Carole Goldsmith, president of West Hills College Coalinga. Her college was home last year to a unique Paramount Ag Academy for students from area schools, a summer program that brought pupils to the college campus for classes and demonstrations intended to showcase careers in agriculture. "Many of the students were from small, rural farming communities, such as Avenal, and the students were mostly the children of farm workers," said Goldsmith. "Their view of farm work was often limited to harvesting crops in the fields. But our Ag Academy taught them about the opportunities in the agriculture business for workers with technical training and knowledge of math, science and computerized equipment, jobs with bright futures and high pay."

WHCCD will work with industry partners in the new program, including the Roll Global family of Paramount Farming and related entities, along with Olam International, Cal-Organics and Grimmway Farms. West Hills and Reedley will partner on programs to be offered in Avenal and Sanger.

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West Hills College was the lead fiscal agency for a consortium of 11 colleges in the Central valley that won a $19.6 million award in 2011 to accomplish similar goals. Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, the three year initiative led to streamlined career technical training in healthcare and other fields where demand for workers was higher than the supply of qualified applicants. "We successfully achieved our goals under that grant," Goldsmith said. "Our application for the newest grant was built upon our experience and past performance in moving the needle when it comes to reforming the higher education model."

The awards are part of a national trend. Recently, tech giant Google, Inc., announced it would invest in a computerized farming network to crunch data on seeds and soil and help farmers grow more crops and save money.

Just last month, West Hill College hosted an Ag Hackathon at its Farm of the Future. Dozens of software developers converged on Coalinga and in two days developed useable mobile applications that will streamline the scheduling of watering and fertilizer application in order to enhance production and conserve resources for area farmers.

COS, Proteus, Inc., Offer Free, Vocational ESL Class for Manufacturing

Staff Reports

College of the Sequoias and Proteus, Inc. are hosting a package of Vocational ESL classes for manufacturing starting now. The course meets Mondays and Wednesdays through July 22 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Classes are held at the Proteus office, 224 NW 3rd Street, Visalia. There is no charge to take the course. To register, contact Liset Caudillo at (559) 471-4550 or at lcaudillo@proteusinc.org.

This is part of a Drought Relief Initiative of which COS is one of six colleges receiving funding made available through drought-aid legislation signed into law earlier in 2014 by Governor Jerry Brown. An agreement signed by the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency (LWDA), the Employment Training Panel (ETP) and the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) provides training to workers and employers in the California areas hit hardest by the drought. For more information, on this class or other initiative classes, see www.cos.edu/TrainingCenter/droughtreliefetp.

Classes are designed for individuals with basic English language skills but who need assistance with language skills specific to manufacturing and production jobs. Sessions include technical vocabulary exercises, technical writing exercises, resume writing, mock interviews, application and interview skills. There are five main modules to the course: Introduction & Safety; Quality Practices; Manufacturing Processes & Production; Maintenance Awareness; Resume Preparation, Application and Interview Process.

Farm Credit West Awards $18,000 in College Scholarships

Staff Reports

Farm Credit West is pleased to announce the winners of the 2015 Scholarship Program. Twelve first-time scholarship recipients were each awarded with $1,500 scholarships for the upcoming school year. These scholarships were given to students who are devoted to making a difference in their agricultural communities.

Recipients are either children of Farm Credit West customers or are Farm Credit West customers. Over the last twenty-one years, Farm Credit West has awarded $635,000 in scholarships. In July of this year, it is estimated Farm Credit West will award an additional $22,000 in scholarships to renewing scholarship recipients.

First-time Scholarship Winners

The following students were awarded with a first time scholarship in the amount of $1,500 for the 2015/2016 collegiate school year. Each eligible student may renew their scholarship three times for a total of $6,000 in scholarships over four years. Each student is profiled below based on information from their application including a quote from the essay they submitted.

Sarah Dreyer of Exeter, CA attends Exeter Union High School where she is active in FFA, 4-H, swimming and tennis teams, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes among other activities and volunteer time. In the fall, Sarah will be attending Oregon State University with a major in Animal Science. Sarah is the daughter of Dan and Patty Dreyer. "My education in college will be used to help me understand the science of animals on a deeper level in order to have the skills to be applied to the animal genetics career field."

Elena Montemagni of Visalia, CA attends Redwood High School and in the fall plans to attend University of Nebraska, Lincoln and major in Pre-Veterinary with a minor in Engler Ag Business Entrepreneurship. While in high school, Elena has earned a lifetime CSF membership award, recognized as a "Radical Ranger", worked as an intern for Congressman David. G Valadao, active FFA Member, and Farm Bureau Youth Leadership Program participant among other accomplishments and activities. Elena is the daughter of Eric and Maria Montemagni. "I would like to use my education to help other countries raise healthy animals while gaining diverse experience."

Matt Pandol III of Delano, CA attends Garces Memorial High School where he was a Boys State Delegate, scholar athlete in tennis and soccer, held leadership positions for the Young Republicans and CSF member among other accolades. Matt plans to attend Purdue Universityin the fall and major in Agronomy. Matt is the son of Matt Jr. and Linda Pandol. "With my degree in Agronomy, I would like to come back to California and try to help the farmers make advances in farming along with conserving our enviroment."

Kings Fair

Continued from p. 17

A rodeo will be held on Sunday.

The fair offers live entertainment each evening with the James Garner Tribute to Johnnie Cash on Thursday, Journey Revisited on Friday, Little Texas on Saturday and Los Sables de Tierra Caliente on Sunday. Other stages will feature other bands including Kevin Willard and the Cadillac Boys, Prestige, Hired Gun, Califas, Flashback and the Crawdaddy's. Magic acts and jugglers will be performing their acts around the grounds. And the popular Puzzlemania will be located in the Floriculture building.

"We made the aggressive decision to be affordable at the gate," O'Neil said.

Admission to the fair is $1 on Thursday's opening day, with $1 carnival rides, and $1 on Sunday, closing day. Regular entrance fees are $5. On Saturday, Hero's Day, all military, veterans and their dependents are admitted free. All concerts and the rodeo are included with admission. Presale carnival wristbands are $20 for unlimited rides and are available at a variety of locations throughout Kings County. There is an additional admission cost for sprint car racing.

Last year's attendance to the fair was 33,000. This year's anticipated attendance is 40,000-plus, O'Neil said.

"Hopefully the weather will cooperate and we'll have good attendance," she said.

Fair hours are 5pm-midnight Thursday and Friday, June 11-12; 3pm-midnight, Saturday and Sunday, June 13-14.

The fairgrounds are located at 801 So. 10th Street, Hanford. Parking is $5.

For more information, visit www.kingsfair.com.

Calendar

Every Third Tuesday, Monthly: The League of Women Voters of Tulare County meets, 11:45am
Enjoy lunch and a discussion at Sue Sa's Club House, 699 W. Center in Visalia. A fixed price luncheon for $13.00 inc. tax and tip will be served. The public is welcome. Reservations are required by calling 734-6501.

1st and 3rd Thursdays: Central Valley Tea Party Meetings, 6pm
819 West Visalia Road, Farmersville.

June 8 through August: Oil Paintings by Betty Berk
This is a one-woman exhibit at Cafe 225. There will be a reception at 1pm on Sunday, June 14.

Through June: Visalia Branch Library Teen Homework Center, 3-6:30pm
The Visalia Branch Library offers a place for teens to do their homework Tuesdays through Fridays. The library is located at 200 W. Oak St.

Through June: Tulare Public Library Homework Help
Homework help for children in grades K-12 will be available in the Tulare Public Library Learning Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4-7pm and Saturdays from 1-4pm.

Through July 11: "New Artist/Old Soul" --Paintings by Anees Akhund.
At the Tulare Historical Museum's Heritage Art Gallery, 444 West Tulare Avenue in Tulare, Thursday--Saturday 10am to 4pm. $5 for Adults; $3 for Seniors 55+ & SoCal Automobile Club Members; $2 for Students; Free for Tulare City Historical Society Members and Children under 5. Admission to Heritage Art Gallery is free.

Through October 28: Free Fly Casting Instruction, 6-7pm
Kaweah Fly Fishers are offering fly casting lessons at Del Lago Park in Tulare every Wednesday evening until October 28. Rods and reels will be supplied or you may bring your own.

JUNE

June 4: The Doobie Brothers, 6pm
When the Doobies take the stage in Lemoore, Johnston will be joined by the band's co-founder, guitarist and vocalist Pat Simmons, and the band's long-time guitarist John McFee. Tickets for the show, available at www.tachipalace.com, start at $45. VIP packages that include prime seating, a chance to meet the band and an array of Doobie Brothers-themed gear, are also available starting at $160. Doors for the June 4 concert open at 6pm, with the show starting at 7:30. The Tachi Palace is located at 17225 Jersey Ave. in Lemoore.

June 5: First Friday Porterville Art Walk, 5-8pm
This free, self-guided, public art walk brings together art lovers and community friends to Porterville's downtown. It occurs the first Friday of every month. Galleries, studios, businesses, and other venues will open their exhibitions at 5pm and run the free event until 8 pm. Bring just yourself or your entire family!

June 5 & 6: The 23rd Annual Dinuba Car Show
Friday evening, cruise through beautiful downtown Dinuba and then stop at the Entertainment Plaza with your blankets and lawn chairs for a FREE concert in the park featuring The DAZZ Band & JoJo! The excitement continues Saturday morning in with "Cars in the Park" Car Show! See hundreds of stunning cars, trucks, motorcycles, and more at Rose Ann Vuich Park in Dinuba. Also a Pancake breakfast served from 7-10am by the Dinuba Lions Club and a Car Swap meet. Vehicle registration and parking begins Saturday morning at 7am. Registration is $25 and applications can be picked up and submitted at the Dinuba Chamber of Commerce office, or download the application here. The car show opens to the public at 10am, with music, food and vendors, and fun continuing throughout the day. The best part is… it's FREE!!

June 5: Cruise Night Show & Shine and Concert
5-8pm Cruise Night Show & Shine and Pre-registration; 5:30pm Beer Garden and Food Vendors Open; 6:30-7pm Miss Dinuba Candidates / Candidate Choice Awards; 8pm The Dazz Band & JoJo"-FREE CONCERT" (Bring your own lawn chairs to sit in. No Ice Chest allowed at the concert. Cruisers welcome, limited secured parking available for classic and show cars.)

June 6: Car Show Event
7-10am Entrant Registration; 10-2pm Car Show Vendors & Music; 10am-12pm Judging; 2pm Awards Ceremony.

June 6: Free Screening, 8am-noon
Kaweah Delta Health Care District will host a free screening for abdominal aortic aneurysms from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturday, June 6, at Kaweah Delta Imaging Center, 4949 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia. Men and women who are 60 years or older and have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, emphysema or obesity should be screened along with men and women 50 years and older with a family history of the condition. To get a free screening, advance registration is required by calling 625-4118.

June 6 – July 18: Yosemite Renaissance XXX
Originating in Yosemite, this annual juried exhibit celebrates its 30th year by presenting over 50 works of art covering a wide range of media with a diverse interpretation of Yosemite and the Sierra's. Regular gallery hrs: Wed-Fri 11-4pm / Sat-Sun 12-3pm Free admission / Tours by appointment Information: 1-559-584-1065 Location: Kings Art Center, 605 N. Douty St. Hanford, CA. 93230

June 6- July 18: The Drawings of Ellen Milinich
Local artist Ellen Milinich presents over 20 charcoal portraits in this retrospective exhibit. Regular gallery hrs: Wed-Fri 11-4pm / Sat-Sun 12-3pm Free admission / Tours by appointment Information: 1-559-584-1065 Location: Kings Art Center, 605 N. Douty St. Hanford, CA. 93230

June 7: Concert in the Park 2015, 7pm
Listen to Kings Symphony Orchestra play Hanford Civic Park / Historic Courthouse Stage, 400 N. Douty St. in Hanford. This is a **free** event. For more information, contact the Hanford Parks and Recreation Department at 585-2525.

June 8: TKRL Darrel Waterman Memorial 14th Annual Golf for Life Tournament, 10:30am
The 4-person shot-gun scramble represents a major fundraising event forTulare-Kings Right To Life. Entry fee is $150 per person, which entitles the participant to 18 holes of golf on one of Central California's finest courses, plus a light lunch and a catered dinner at the VCC clubhouse. Check-in begins at 10:30 a.m. with tee-off at 12:00noon. For information about Sponsor Packages and/or Registration Forms, contact April Kesterson at 732-5000, or visit www.tkrl.org.

June 10: Emergency Response Preparedness, 11:30am – 1:30pm
Boretti, Inc. invites you to attend an informative presentation on Emergency Response Preparedness. Speaker: Greg Bird, CSP, Boretti, Inc. Don't be caught by surprise…Be Prepared. $50.00 per person (Meal included) Pay at the door by cash or check made payable to Boretti, Inc. To reserve your spot, please RSVP by June 8th Call Michelle Corral at 559-799-2332 or Email - michelle@borettiinc.com

June 10: Romance of the Rhine & Mosel River Cruise, Noon-1pm
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce is offering a chance to take an all-inclusive trip to Switzerland, France, Germany, The Netherlands, and Belgium. The trip is a 16-day River Cruise, with international airfare from Fresno. Accommodations include 14 nights aboard a private Grand Circle river ship in an outside cabin and 42 meals. The cruise departs March 31, returning April 15. Join the Chamber on June 10 at noon at the new office, 222 N. Garden St Suite 300.

June 10: Concert in the Park 2015, 7:30-9pm
Bring chairs and blankets--but no alcohol--to Tulare Zumwalt Park to hear Brad Wilson's Rock & Blues on the stage of the John Philip Souza Pavilion. FREE! For more information, please call the Tulare Parks and Recreation Department.

June 11: Ribbon cutting, noon
SVS and Tulare Kings Hispanic Chamber of Commerce would like to invite you to a Ribbon Cutting at Social Vocational Services Inc.,1225 Leland Avenue in Tulare.

June 11-14: Kings Fair, Friday & Saturday Noon, Sunday 10am

Thursday, June 11: Dollar Day- $1 Admission and $1 Rides
Fair Hours: 5pm- Midnight (Ride tickets can be purchased at the Carnival Ticket Booths)

Friday, June 12: Five Dollar Friday- $5 Admission
Fair Hours: 5pm- Midnight

Saturday, June 13: Heroes Day- All Military FREE Admission
Fair Hours: 3pm- Midnight
General Admission Ticket Prices Apply to All Others

Sunday, June 14: $1 Admission before 6pm(No reentry before 6pm) Fair Hours: 3pm- Midnight General Admission Ticket Prices Apply Starting at 6pm

Adult: $10.00; Children ages 6-10: $5.00; Senior ages 60+: $5.00; Children 5 and under: Free; Parking: $5.00. For more information call 584-3318.

June 11: Veterans Aid and Attendance Workshop, 6- 7:30pm
Veterans can earn up to $25,022 of tax-free income per year to pay for assistance with activities of daily living. Find out more by attending this free event. Guest speaker is Gilbert Fleming, Elder Law Attorney. For additional information or to RSVP, call 624-3503. Quail Park is located at 4520 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia.

June 11: Slow Season, Renn & The Portals at the Cellar Door, 8pm
Tickets are $5 for this 21+ show. The Cellar Door is located at 101 W. Main St. in Visalia.

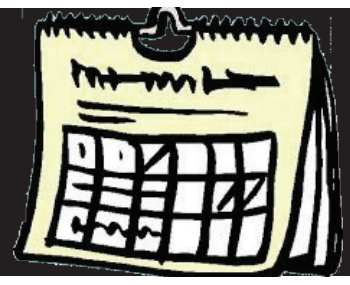
June 12: Tulare County Dairywomen 31st Annual Dairy Princess Coronation and Scholarship Fundraiser, 6-9pm
The Tulare Chamber of Commerce along with the Tulare County Dairywomen will host the 31st Annual Dairy Princess Coronation and Scholarship Fundraiser dinner at the International Agri-Center Heritage Complex, 4500 S. Laspina St. Tulare. We also will be "Saluting our Dairy Industry" that evening. Tickets are $30 per person.

June 12: Visalia Teen Idol Auditions, 1-5pm
Audition packets for the 12th Annual Visalia Teen Idol Contest can be picked up now at the Visalia Parks & Recreation Business Office, located inside the Anthony Community Center, at 345 N. Jacob St. The Visalia Teen Idol Contest is a talent search for the best teen singer in Visalia. Youth ages 13 to 19, who live within the Visalia Unified School District Boundaries, are eligible to pick up an audition packet and tryout. There is no charge to try-out or to be in the Visalia Teen Idol contest, but packets must be completed and turned in at the time of tryout.

June 12: Ceremony, Tony Molina, and Creative Adult at the Cellar Door, 6pm
$10 all ages. Tickets: Ticketweb.com. The Cellar Door is located at 101 W. Main St. in Visalia.

June 12: Concert in Springville Park, 7-9pm
Patti Torrey & Irregulars

June 13: "Just Walk" With a Doc, 8-9am
The Healthy Visalia Committee working in partnership with Kaweah Delta Health Care District, Family HealthCare Network, Tulare County Medical Society and the Visalia Parks and Recreation Dept. continues its 2015 Visalia's "Just Walk" With a Doc walking program. The walks will take place at Blain Park, 3101 S. Court St., in Visalia.



June 13: Veterans Aid and Attendance Workshop, 10:00-11:30am
Veterans can earn up to $25,022 of tax-free income per year to pay for assistance with activities of daily living. Find out more by attending this free event. Guest speaker is Gilbert Fleming, Elder Law Attorney. For additional information or to RSVP, call 624-3503. Quail Park is located at 4520 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia.

June 13: Kings Lions Brewfest, 5-9pm
Beer tasting--and food!--at the Kings Lions complex (Hwy 198 &19th) 100% of the proceeds go to local/community charities. Tickets are $35 for the 21+ event. For more information call (559) 924-4417.

June 13: Visalia Smooth Dancers June Dance, 6-10:30pm
Visalia Smooth Dancers Monthly Dance. This month's theme, "Ballroom goes a little bit Country", Social Ballroom dancing, Lesson and Potluck Dinner at the Exeter Memorial Building in Exeter. Lesson 6:00, Dinner 7:00, Dancing from 8-10:30. Members $10 with dish, Members w/o dish and Guests $18. For more information, call Linda Guttierrez, 559-799-0487.

June 13: Summer Latin Jam, 8pm
Eagle Mountain Casino welcomes El Chicano, MC Magic, Amanda Perez, Lighter Shade of Brown, Tierra and Malo on Saturday June 13th for an all-inclusive concert at 8pm. Tickets are on sale now and start at only $30.

June 14: Jazz Concert with BBQ, 12:30pm
Internationally acclaimed High Sierra Jazz Band, live in concert, with the best BBQ dinner you've ever tasted, Saturday June 14th, at the Three Rivers Memorial Building located at 43490 Sierra Dr./Hwy 198 in Three Rivers. Doors at 12:30 pm, Lunch/Dinner shortly after 1 pm. Concert starts at 2 pm. Admission: Free for jazz club members and children 12 and under. $10 for everyone else.

June 17: Concert in the Park 2015, 7:30-9pm
Bring chairs and blankets--but no alcohol--to Tulare Zumwalt Park to hear Flashback's Classic Rock & Country on the stage of the John Philip Souza Pavilion. FREE! For more information, please call the Tulare Parks and Recreation Department.

June 18: Visalia Chamber of Commerce 2015 Annual Awards Celebration, 6-9:30pm
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce 2015 Annual Awards celebration honoring Man, Woman and Businesses of the Year will be held at the Visalia Convention Center. Tickets are $70.00 each or a table of 8 for $520.00

June 18-21: Wilderness Trip
White Chief Cave: the Underground Wilderness of Mineral King. Duration: 4 days. To register, call the Sequoia Field Institute at 559-565-4251

June 19: Visalia Teen Idol Auditions, 1-5pm
Audition packets for the 12th Annual Visalia Teen Idol Contest can be picked up now at the Visalia Parks & Recreation Business Office, located inside the Anthony Community Center, at 345 N. Jacob St. The Visalia Teen Idol Contest is a talent search for the best teen singer in Visalia. Youth ages 13 to 19, who live within the Visalia Unified School District Boundaries, are eligible to pick up an audition packet and tryout. There is no charge to try-out or to be in the Visalia Teen Idol contest, but packets must be completed and turned in at the time of tryout.

June 19: Concert in the Park 2015, 7pm
Listen to ROADHOUSE play Hanford Civic Park / Historic Courthouse Stage, 400 N. Douty St. in Hanford. This is a free event. For more information, contact the Hanford Parks and Recreation Department at 585-2525.

June 19 to 28: Heritage of America
The Visalia Chamber of Commerce will host a "Travel with the Chamber" trip, which includes airfare, 14 meals and a professional travel guide. Destinations include New York, Philadelphia, Amish Country, Gettysburg, Shenandoah Valley, Monticello, Williamsburg, Mount Vernon, Washington, D.C. and the Smithsonian. For information, call 734-5876.

June 21: Annual Helicopter Candy Drop, 1pm
Due to all local helicopters being needed to fight forest fires and other emergencies, we've been forced to move the annual Helicopter Candy Drop to Sunday, June 21. That game will now start at 1:00. This Sunday, Kids' Club members will be able to play catch on the field after the game.

June 22 to 26: Yellowstone National Park Wildlife Safari
The Sequoia Natural History Association (SNHA) will hold an eco-tour of Yellowstone National Park. Reserve seats by calling 565-4222. For information, visit sequoiahistory.org.

June 24: Miss Devon & the Outlaw plus Krystyn Harris with Brook Wallace, 7pm
This is a rare opportunity to catch two acts in one for the same price. We are confident you'll enjoy this evening of wonderful Western music by four talented Texans. Bring out the kids too as they'll be no school in the morning. Call Mavericks at 559 624-1400 for tickets (Visa/MC) or better yet stop by for a cup of their almost world famous, freshly roasted coffee. Limited seating, doors open at 6 (open seating) show time at 7 PM.

June 24: Concert in the Park 2015, 7:30-9pm
Bring chairs and blankets--but no alcohol--to Tulare Zumwalt Park to hear Tulare Community Band's Patriotic & Military music on the stage of the John Philip Souza Pavilion. FREE! For more information, please call the Tulare Parks and Recreation Department.

June 25: REO SPEEDWAGON, 7:30pm
At the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets $39-$89.Benefitting the Creative Center Foundation. Presented by CHOICES and Rainmaker Productions.

June 27: Tagus Ranch reunion, 10am-2pm
The reunion is a gathering of families who lived, worked, and/or went to school on Tagus Ranch during the early and mid-1900's.Others who are interested in this period of Tulare County history are also welcome. The event is at Mooney Grove Park in Visalia, Arbor 18. Bring potluck to join in the lunch. Please bring photos and memorabilia to share. This is an opportunity to see friends, make new ones, swap stories, and be part of oral history making. For more information, call Joan at 679-6015.

June 27: Under the Streetlamp, 7:30pm
The Streetlamp will perform favorite Doo-Wop, Motown and old-time rock n' roll hits at the Visalia Fox Theatre, 300 Main St. For information, visit foxvisalia.org.

June 29: Pizza with a Purpose, 5-9pm
Enjoy a great meal & support a great cause! Every #lastmonday of the month in 2015. The Planing Mill will donate a portion of the evening's revenue to the VRM!

June 29-July 20: Center Stage Strings - Music Festival & Camp
You are invited to beautiful Three Rivers, CA anytime - but especially this summer, from June 29 to July 20, for fabulous concerts provided by guest artists, staff and students, during Center Stage Strings camp for young string virtuosos. Over the span of these 3 weeks, you will hear young budding artists and already world class performers as they study, rehearse and perform courtesy of Center Stage Strings, founded by Artistic Director and prize-winning concert violinist Danielle Belen of Los Angeles. Danielle will perform alongside her Center Stage Strings colleagues for some very special concerts and we will also be treated to other very special concerts by amazing visiting artists. You just don't want to miss any of these concerts, let alone the chance to see and hear some of the biggest young stars in classical music! Info: http://www.centerstagestrings.com/

JULY

July 1: Concert in the Park 2015, 7:30-9pm
Bring chairs and blankets--but no alcohol--to Tulare Zumwalt Park to see J.E.R.K.'s variety show on the stage of the John Philip Souza Pavilion. FREE! For more information, please call the Tulare Parks and Recreation Department.

July 4: Lemoore July 4th Celebration/ Firecracker 5k Run
For information call 924-6767.

July 4: Exeter 4th of July
Experience Exeter's "Small Town Charm" as we celebrate Independence Day. Activities in the Exeter City Park will include a 10K Run and Horseshoe Tournament. To sign up for the run or tournament call Exeter Community Services at 559-592-5262. Of course, no Fourth of July would be complete without fireworks! The Exeter Lion's Club invites you to come and enjoy their spectacular FREE fireworks show, beginning at dusk on July 4th at Lions Stadium on Rocky Hill Drive. Info: 559-592-2919

July 7-10: Christy Wood's Summer Horse Kamp.
Looking for something to keep the children busy during the day? Christy's Horse Kamp Level 1 includes instruction in leading and grooming, feeding and care, saddling and bridling, and riding. Level 2 includes lunging, obstacles and riding all 3 gaits. Both levels are taught by judge, instructor, trainer, champion and author Christy Wood at Wood 'N' Horse Training Stables, located at 42846 North Fork Drive in Three Rivers, CA. Call 559-561-4268 to register.

July 8: Concert in the Park 2015, 7:30-9pm
Bring chairs and blankets--but no alcohol--to Tulare Zumwalt Park to hear Bruthas of Anutha Mutha's Rock, Blues & R&B on the stage of the John Philip Souza Pavilion. FREE! For more information, please call the Tulare Parks and Recreation Department.

July 10: Concert in the Park 2015, 7pm
Listen to JJ Brown play Hanford Civic Park / Historic Courthouse Stage, 400 N. Douty St. in Hanford. This is a free event. For more information, contact the Hanford Parks and Recreation Department at 585-2525.

July 10: Concert in Springville Park, 7-9pm
Richard Frost & Marco

July 11: "Just Walk" With a Doc, 8-9am
The Healthy Visalia Committee working in partnership with Kaweah Delta Health Care District, Family HealthCare Network, Tulare County Medical Society and the Visalia Parks and Recreation Dept. continues its 2015 Visalia's "Just Walk" With a Doc walking program. The walks will take place at Blain Park, 3101 S. Court St., in Visalia.

Jul 11: 5th annual Kids Day at Coe Park, 4:30-8pm
Come out and join us for the 5th annual Kids Day event at Coe Park,543 S. Douty St. in Hanford. Free for everyone. Call Graciela Davis at (559) 572-4435 for more information.

July 12: Hot Dog Festival & Craft Show, 10am-4pm
This annual event at the Three Rivers Museum supports the Three Rivers Volunteer Firefighters and the Museum. It runs from 10am to 4pm with demonstrations by Tulare County Fire, Cal Fire, and the National Park Service Fire. Lunch includes hot dogs with all the fixings, corn on the cob, and A&W root beer float. For more information: www.3rmuseum.org.

July 12: Martina McBride: The Everlasting Tour, 7:30-9:30pm
Martina McBride returns to the Visalia Fox Theatre! A Rainmaker Productions event benefitting VRM. Tickets available vrmhope.org/events

July 15: Concert in the Park 2015, 7:30-9pm
Bring chairs and blankets--but no alcohol--to Tulare Zumwalt Park to hear Tule British Brass Band's Traditional music on the stage of the John Philip Souza Pavilion. FREE! For more information, please call

Sports

Orosi Booster Club Working to Plan Ed Coates/George Millhorn Golf Classic

Stefan Barros

With the second annual Ed Coates/George Millhorn Golf Classic approaching on Saturday, June 6, the Orosi Booster Club is working hard to plan out the details of the tournament and try to find people to participate.

According to Orosi Booster Club President Jon Smoljan, the numbers will be down from last year, so far as participants are concerned. His goal right now is just to find people who want to be involved with the golf classic.

"We're just looking for golfers right now," he said. "Golfers are what will fund us. Also sponsorship will help, but if our numbers are good, we should be comfortable."

Smoljan said, last year's classic had more participants because the money was specifically designated. This year the planning is a little different.

"Financially, it's been tough," he said. "We've been looking for tee sponsors; we're doing raffles now too to see if that helps. It was easier to plan out last year's tournament and it was easier to sell because there were people excited about the fact that the money would go toward the new football field.

"This year's will be helping fund the boosters and help them proceed with what they want to do going forward."

Just by the sheer numbers of people participating, Smoljan doesn't see this year's tournament being equally successful as the first, but that is not stopping him and the other boosters from trying for a successful classic.

"Last year we had a lot of alumni come out," he said. "This year we're expecting some newer and older alumni and people from the community, hopefully."

The tournament's namesakes, Coates and Millhorn, are expected to bring a good amount of people.

"They are bringing two different clientele of people, but it should help," Smolgian said. "Every little bit helps. It's been tough planning, but everything should be okay.

"We just want golfers at this point," he said. "People who want to get involved; golfers are what will help pay for this."

Smoljan and the other boosters have many ideas as to useful and productive ways to use the funds.

"We have discussed male and female sports scholarships," he said. "We want to continue to provide meals for the teams. Just be that support system. We just have a lot of people in the boosters who have good ideas.

"We're taking a different approach to planning. Last year we just wanted to set the groundwork. This year we just want to continue what we've already built."

The Ed Coates/George Millhorn Golf Classic takes place Saturday, June 6 at the Ridge Creek Golf Course in Dinuba. For more information, call: (559) 804-6263 or (559) 799-9894.

Tulare-Kings Right to Life to Hold 14th Annual Golf for Life Tournament

The 4-person shot-gun scramble represents a major fundraising event for TKRL. Entry fee is $150 per person, which entitles the participant to 18 holes of golf on one of Central California's finest courses, plus a light lunch and a catered dinner at the VCC clubhouse.

Check-in begins at 10:30 a.m. with tee-off at 12:00noon. This year's tournament features golf for four at Poppy Hills golf course at Pebble Beach for the First Place team, plus a wide variety of raffle prizes and live auction items including a limo ride and tickets to a Bay Area NFL football game.

TKRL is a community benefit organization that works for restored moral, cultural and legal respect for innocent human life, reaching out to a society afflicted by legalized abortion, infanticide, assisted suicide and euthanasia. TKRL offers education in these life issues and promotes healing hope for anyone injured in heart, mind and body by participation in such attacks against the value of human life.

For information about Sponsor Packages and/or Registration Forms, contact April Kesterson at 732-5000, or visit www.tkrl.org.

14th Annual Golf for LIFE
TULARE-KINGS RIGHT TO LIFE'S DARREL WATERMAN MEMORIAL

Wine & Beer Tasting
At
Redwood Room
Totem Market & Gifts
BBQ & Deli
J&J Cellars - Kelsey See Canyon Vineyards
(559) 561-4463
45186 Sierra Drive, Three Rivers

30548 Road 196 Exeter, CA 93221
WWS
WATER WELL SOLUTIONS
Downhole Video Inspections • Well Rehabilitation
Well Repair • Fishing • Jacking
THE FOLLOWING ARE POSSIBLE WELL CLEANING METHODS:
1. Brushing
2. Chemicals
3. High-Pressure Jetting
4. Sonar-Jet
5. Swabbing
DESPITE CONTRADICTIONS,
THERE IS NO ONE METHOD FOR CLEANING A WELL
559-594-5900

Health

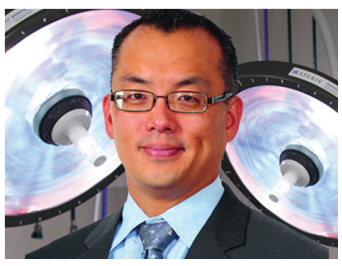
New Neurosurgery Program Keeps Patients with Severe Head Injuries Close to Home

In its first two months, Kaweah Delta Health Care District's new, around-the clock neurosurgery program, has kept more than 65 patients from having to go out of the area to be treated for severe head injuries and neurosurgical conditions.

Ian Johnson, M.D.

"This program is already changing the lives of people in this community," said Ian Johnson, M.D., who heads the program and is the chief of neurosurgical surgery at UCSF-Fresno.

The new program allows people to be treated at Kaweah Delta Medical Center rather than being transported hours away to be treated for serious traumatic head injuries, as well as a variety of neurosurgical conditions including traumatic brain injury, brain tumors, brain hemorrhages and spinal abnormalities (degenerative disc disease, spinal tumors, spine trauma).


Yu-Hung Kuo, M.D.

Additionally, people can now undergo planned surgeries such as brain tumor surgery or spinal surgery at the medical center.

Kaweah Delta partnered with Dr. Johnson and a team of board-certified and fellowship-trained neurosurgeons who are part of the UCSF-Fresno Neurosurgery Group in March to implement the new program.

Daniel Miller, M.D.

Those neurosurgeons include Dr. Yu-Hung Kuo and Dr. Daniel Miller, who are both part of UCSF-Fresno program.

Also participating in the program will be Dr. Parley Madsen. Joining the team in September, will be Dr. Bill Whitlatch, Jr., a Redwood High School graduate, who will return to the community he grew up in to help provide patients with neurosurgical care.

He received his medical degree at Boston University, School of Medicine and completed his residency at Duke University Hospital.

"Care for traumatic head injuries is what is most important for the families and community members in this region," Dr. Johnson said. "When someone has a subdural hematoma or an epidural hematoma, they can die quickly or be left with devastating consequences. Being able to be seen here will cut down dramatically on the time it takes for these patients to receive care."

To aid the program, neurosurgeons at Kaweah Delta put into use a new piece of equipment that is helping improve clinical outcomes by providing neurosurgeons with real-time images during surgery.

The stealth imaging system provides neurosurgeons with real-time intra-operative imaging of a patient's anatomy with high quality images and a large two and three dimension field-of-view, said Benton Duckett, director of Surgical Services at Kaweah Delta.

"This will allow for the best surgical outcomes possible. This new technology allows surgeons to get as close as possible to the area needing repair and provide the best surgical outcomes," Duckett said.

To support patients before and after surgery, a neurosurgical clinic is under construction at 202 W. Willow Ave. This clinic is expected to open in September, 2015. Currently, the group is seeing patients at 202 W. Willow, Suite 103. To make an appointment with the UCSF-Fresno Neurosurgery Group, call 559-230-0530.

For more information, visit www.ccsi-fresno.com.

Established in 1963, Kaweah Delta Health Care District is a 581-bed health care district with 3,900 employees serving the Central Valley. It is the only level III trauma center serving Tulare and Kings counties.

For more information, visit www.kaweahdelta.org or follow Kaweah Delta on Twitter and Facebook.

Supervision, Safety Barriers Strongly Recommended for Pools, Spas

Tulare County Health & Human Services Public Health Officer, Dr. Karen Haught, is strongly recommending that community members be extra vigilant in supervising children around swimming pools and spas during this holiday weekend and throughout the summer months.

According to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), more California toddlers are killed by accidental drowning than by any other kind of accident, and those who survive often suffer permanent brain damage from lack of oxygen.

"Children who are around swimming areas should be kept within the direct line of sight of an adult who is supervising them," states Dr. Haught. "Children who are in or next to water can fall in silently and drown immediately, and children who are one to four years old are at the greatest risk."

The CDPH gives these tips for improving adult supervision:

- Never leave a young child alone in or around a pool, spa, or wading pool, even for a few seconds;
- When young children are in or around a pool, assign a "Water Watcher" to keep them in direct sight;
- Keep doors and gates leading to water closed, never propped open, even when using the pool;
- If a child is missing, always look first in the pool, seconds count;
- Keep rescue equipment (safety ring, long pole) and a phone next to the pool; and
- Plan start and end times for children using the pool.

Another recommended measure is that parents, babysitters, guardians, and anyone that may be supervising children should take the cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) course annually.

California's Swimming Pool Safety Act (Health and Safety Code §§115920-115929) requires at least one approved safety barrier be in place for all pools and spas built after January 1, 1998 and for any pools being remodeled.

Property owners should voluntarily install barriers around pools that have been constructed prior to 1998.

To find out more about recommended safety barriers, visit: http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/injviosaf/Documents/DrowningSafetyGuideFactSheet.pdf.

For questions, please contact the DCPH Safe and Active Communities Branch at (916) 552- 9800, or sac@cdph.ca.gov.

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